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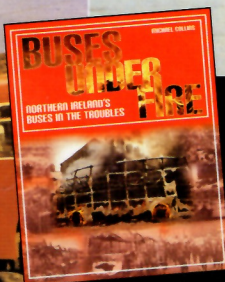
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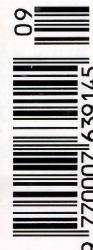


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# BUSES

VOLUME 57 NO 618 SEPTEMBER 2006

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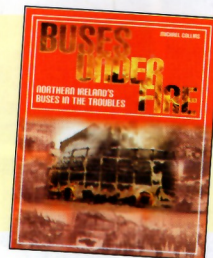
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MARK LYONS

## PTEs NEED TO SHOW MORE VISION

**T**he Passenger Transport Executive Group has won itself a potent new ally in former government minister Nick Brown, who has taken up its case to re-regulate bus services in the conurbations outside London. His 10min rule bill to grant these powers to the PTEs may have been more of a token gesture than a serious attempt to change the way that buses operate, but it has raised PTEG's profile.

And it comes at the same time as Graham Stringer, chief cheerleader among the Labour MPs seeking re-regulation, has won mainly Labour and Liberal Democrat support for an early day motion on the subject.

The problem however, as Brian Cox writes in his Inside Track column this month, is that PTEG and its supporters still don't seem to have grasped that they are putting across a flawed message. The flaw isn't necessarily that re-regulation is wrong. Nor are they wrong to argue that there are fundamental weaknesses in the way that today's bus market operates. Heaven knows, there are, even if Go North East's Sunderland network relaunch proves that commercial operators still have clever new ideas to offer. It's the *Animal Farm*-like mantra of 'Regulated London Good, Deregulated Mancastlehampool Bad' that does PTEG no favours.

As Brian Cox points out, it has taken Arriva's Mike Cooper — a man with what seems like 5mins' experience in the bus industry — little longer than that to recognise that London and the other conurbations are like chalk and cheese. The demographics, the population density, the sheer impossibility and prohibitive cost of using a car for many journeys all are part of the mix that favours buses there. In that respect, it is more like the few historic cathedral cities where deregulated buses are doing exceptionally well and certainly not like the relatively car friendly regional cities.

Possibly unintentionally, Merseytravel chairman Mark Dowd has hit on the real issue that needs to be addressed when he complains of 'estate after estate losing lifeline bus services' and argues that there would be an outcry if these kinds of cuts took place on the Surrey rail network. That issue is the relevance of public transport to a significant proportion of the electorate. In Surrey and all across the Greater London travel to work area, trains play a vital role in daily life. Buses in PTE cities — and Surrey for that matter — don't.

The PTEs need to persuade government that whatever new regime they propose will make bus travel so good that people build their lives around its existence, and that the people living in Merseyside and the other conurbations' equivalent of Surrey come to treasure it. If they don't, the danger is that the re-regulated regime would be just another publicly funded service fighting for funds and lacking the political support it needed to gain a bigger share of those funds. They will need that support to fund a better service that doesn't leave people cut off in outlying estates, that reverses the decline in ridership and halts the turnover of driving staff.

PTEG must offer a vision of how it can do that and stop luring the world into believing that the London model alone will make their buses better. It might just end up costing them more money and having its own, if different, fundamental weaknesses.

ALAN MILLAR

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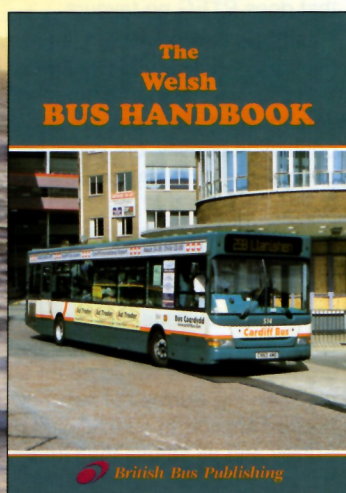
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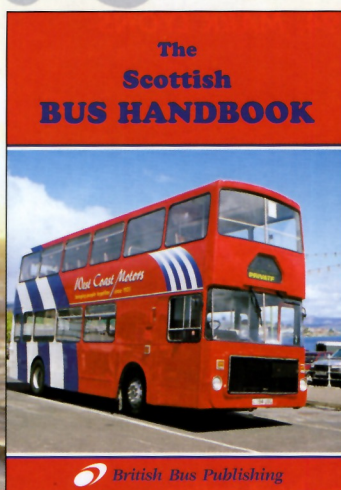
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# MPs set up pressure for PTEs to control networks

The six English passenger transport executives' campaign to control bus services in their areas gained new support in July in a 10min private bill from backbench Labour MP and former agriculture minister Nick Brown.

While the bill stood no chance of becoming law, it is a further step in the long-running campaign by PTEG, the PTEs' campaign group, to re-regulate services in conurbations outside London. It also won backing from fellow Tyneside Labour MP Stephen Byers, the former transport secretary. 'My bill is unashamedly pro-public transport,' Nick Brown told the *Newcastle Journal*. 'It favours the citizen and the broader public interest over narrower commercial interests. Essentially, it is to gain for the rest of metropolitan England what London already has.'

It coincided with an early day motion from Graham Stringer, Labour MP for Manchester Blackley, calling on parliament to recognise 'the success of the franchised bus network in London, which has improved service quality and resulted in much greater use of services' and to note 'the decline in bus patronage, the high turnover of staff and continuing reductions

in socially necessary services since the industry was deregulated'. The motion calls upon the government to make it easier and quicker for local authorities and PTEs to introduce franchising 'in circumstances where the industry has failed to provide a socially inclusive service and deliver the quality necessary to achieve patronage growth in line with national targets'.

It attracted support from a further 84 Labour, 15 Liberal Democrat and two Conservative MPs. The Conservatives are Richard Shepherd (Aldridge-Brownhills, West Midlands) and Derek Conway (Old Bexley and Sidcup). The Labour supporters include former transport ministers Sally Keeble and Gavin Strang as well as noted rebels Diane Abbott, Jeremy Corbyn, John McDonnell, Clare Short and Dennis Skinner.

'One of the best things the government could do for the big regional cities is to give them the powers to plan and regulate their bus networks,' says Graham Stringer. 'Sorting out big city bus networks would be the biggest shot in the arm for the sustainable and equitable regeneration of our urban areas that this government could provide.'



**Above:** French-owned Veolia Transport, which has expressed interest in running franchised services for PTEs, has recently won additional contracts from Nexus and South Yorkshire PTEs through its Dunn-Line subsidiary. This is one of the Optare Solo SlimLines providing the new LinkUp demand responsive service for Nexus on Tyneside.

Merseytravel chairman Mark Dowd, speaking for the six passenger transport authorities, says: 'Unless bus services are regulated, there is no possibility of the government's wider social inclusion objectives being met. Estate after estate has lost lifeline bus services in our areas in the past few years, leaving some of the most deprived communities in the country further isolated from opportunity. If these kinds of cuts were taking place on the Surrey

rail network, there would be an outcry.

'Deregulation has halved the number of bus passengers in our areas and fare levels are 86% higher in real terms. With the unhappy event of the 20th anniversary of deregulation approaching, we will press the government to use its recently announced review of bus policy to make it quicker and easier for PTEs to plan and regulate their bus networks.'

# Centro launches free Brum Stationlink

Centro, the West Midlands PTE, has provided £250,000 first year funding for Stationlink, a free Birmingham bus link connecting Digbeth coach station with the three main line railway stations and other city centre locations.

It contracted the service to Zak's Bus & Coach, which obtained three new Optare Solos at short notice from Mistral Group, from 31 July, running between 07.00 and 18.00 weekdays and Saturdays.

Centro wants National Express, train companies and other business interests to fund the service from next year. The route — which echoes past attempts to provide shoppers' buses in central Birmingham —

is similar to the free route in Leeds that Metro, the West Yorkshire PTE, started in January. Centro says it grew out of a desire to provide better city centre bus links, particularly between New Street and Snow Hill railway stations.

Gurcharan Sidhu, lead West Midlands PTA member for buses, says:

'Stationlink is about giving people a convenient, reliable and easy way of getting from the station to where they want to be at no extra cost once they step off a train, tram, coach or bus. It should also help reduce congestion by providing an attractive alternative to the car, which in turn will provide a better city centre environment for everyone.'

■ Nexus, the Tyne & Wear PTE, has struck a deal with bus operators to continue providing discounted travel for 16 to 18-year-olds in full-time education. Cash-strapped Nexus axed the 50% discount Teen Travel ticket to fund free pensioners' travel, but the new deal — which has no government funding — provides a 25% discount.



**Left:** Zak's Optare Solo MX06 BPK on the first day of the Birmingham Stationlink. **BEN MORROLL**



# Route branding and flat fares herald Go North East relaunch

New Go North East managing director Peter Huntley relaunched his Sunderland and Washington networks on 30 July with distinctive route brands, a flat fare offer, faster direct links and a money-back guarantee.

Recruited earlier this year to reverse years of decline on the company's buses, he remains non-executive chairman of the TAS consultancy, which he founded in 1989 and which was behind many of the industry's high-frequency branded networks of the past 10 years. Since joining Go North East, he has taken senior managers to see how Trent Barton, Brighton & Hove and other successful companies operate and is applying some of their ideas in north-east England.

The most visible change is the relaunch of five routes with their own named liveries and dedicated teams of drivers. Three are Sunderland city services operated using low-floor Mini Pointer Dart midibuses, on which he is trialling a £1 flat fare promoted as Pound 2 Go, as well as a £2.80 city-wide day ticket offered as an alternative to the company-wide £4.10 ticket.

The 26/36 service is branded The Black Cats (named after a Wearside gun battery from Napoleonic times) with a yellow livery and the first-ever direct peak period link between Pennywell estate and the city's Enterprise Park. The 39/39A is branded

Doxford Clipper with silver and purple buses providing all-day connections to Doxford International Business Park, where Arriva has its group headquarters. High-frequency circular service 33/42, offering eight buses an hour each way and quicker connections to the city centre, is The Magic Roundabout with blue buses and images of some of the characters from the children's television series.

Also given their own brands are two Sunderland-Washington-Newcastle routes, which each run four times hourly daytime. Stopping service 56, with a 70min end-to-end journey, has become Fab Fifty Six with orange low-floor Wright Solar-bodied Scania painted in 1960s flower power style. Limited stop X2/X5/X8, with a 55min journey, are Red Arrows with Plaxton-bodied Volvo B10M coaches.

At the same time, routes between Washington and Heworth Metro station were rebranded as Metro Link with prominent logos on standard red/blue livery, and similar treatment was applied a week later when Stanley-Newcastle routes were relaunched as Stanley Shuttle with 'Fab 50' flat 50p fares in Derwentside.

'We are committed to getting more people on buses and

reducing congestion, and the only way to achieve this is by providing regular, reliable, fast, high frequency, value-for-money services. That is what this investment is all about,' says Peter Huntley.

From 30 July, Go North East has also offered an instant money-back guarantee on four limited stop routes, with passengers entitled to claim a refund from the driver if their service runs late. It plans to extend this across the network and is investing in punctuality by fitting every bus with an atomic clock and instituting a 'three strikes and you're out' disciplinary regime for drivers who leave compulsory timing points early.

Also in the pipeline are new buses and depots. After buying late secondhand rather than new buses, he has secured group approval for 42 new single-deckers with air conditioning, double-glazing and what he describes as 'the latest seats', and has evaluated Mercedes-Benz Citaro and Optare Tempo demonstrators on Red Arrows X2.

He anticipates a multi-million pound programme to replace some existing depots in residential areas with new ones on industrial land. 'I want decent modern facilities for our staff at sensible locations that won't annoy the neighbours,' he told the *Newcastle Journal*.



**Above:** The Black Cats livery for cross-river services 26/36 on Mini Pointer Dart 550 (NK53 TKE). According to Go North East, the 1805 Black Cat Battery got its name after men manning the station heard a mysterious miaow from a wailing black cat. **STEVEN HODGSON**



**Above:** A winking Dougal the dog and other characters distinguish the Magic Roundabout livery on MPD 562 (NK53 TLJ). **STEVEN HODGSON**

**Below:** Doxford Clipper-liveried 545 (NA52 AXK). **STEVEN HODGSON**



**Above:** Fab Fifty Six-liveried Scania L94UB/Wright Solar 5207 (NK54 NVB) operating another service a few days before the new network started. **STEVEN HODGSON**

**Below:** Red Arrows coach livery on 7058 (M58 LBB), a Plaxton Expressliner 2-bodied Volvo B10M-50 returned to service from the driving school. **GARY MITCHELHILL**





# Rivals expand as First retrenches again in South West

Stagecoach, Western Greyhound and smaller operators are expanding services following a further round of cutbacks by First Devon & Cornwall.

First implemented these latest cuts on 29 July within months of new managing director Marc Reddy being appointed with a remit to provide 'quality services that are both sustainable and profitable'. They include withdrawal of three of the eight return journeys on Excel-branded X9 (Bude-Okehampton-Exeter) on which it introduced its first wheelchair accessible Plaxton Profile-bodied Volvo B7R coaches last summer. Withdrawal of Okehampton-Exeter short workings and the X10 (Callington-Exeter) and X11 (Bude-Launceston-Exeter) cut a hitherto hourly Exeter-Okehampton commercial service from 14 journeys to five, with a Devon County Council-supported Friday and Saturday evening return journey continuing.

In their place, Stagecoach has introduced new service X30 (Exeter-Okehampton), with Devon County Council funding some journeys and diversions into villages served by the X10. There are seven weekday and six

Saturday return trips. With financial support from Devon and Cornwall councils, Western Greyhound has gone farther by introducing new service 510 linking Newquay and Exeter via Camelford, Launceston and Okehampton. This not only replaces the X10, but also reinstates an end-to-end link lost in an earlier round of First's service cuts. It is operating one round trip with a Van Hool-bodied Volvo B10M coach, plus two return short workings between Camelford and Okehampton, where they connect with the X30. Through tickets are available and Stagecoach and Western Greyhound already accept each other's £6 day tickets.

Western Greyhound managing director Mark Howarth — a former First Devon & Cornwall MD — says there was strong local demand to reintroduce the Newquay-Exeter link. 'It will mean that many isolated villages will regain a bus service. People in places like Tintagel and Boscastle will now be able to make the trip to Exeter and incoming tourists will find it much easier to get to Cornwall. It will also be a useful link into the rail network at Exeter St Davids, where there are good



**Above:** On 31 July, the first day of the replacement services, Stagecoach Devon 14512 (F512 NJE) on route X30 meets Western Greyhound's connecting Mercedes-Benz Vario WK51 BUS in Okehampton. The Northern Counties-bodied Leyland Olympian is among the last survivors of 12 new to Cambus in 1989. Pictures by CHRIS CARTER

connections with some key trains. This is even more important with the uncertainty and reduction in the level of service on the Newquay branch line.'

Further cuts look inevitable in October, as First has notified Devon County Council that it intends to withdraw many tendered and commercial services in north Devon, as rising fuel and other costs mean these are no longer viable. It says up to 67 drivers (around half its platform staff) at Barnstaple depot — part of the business acquired with the £10.6million purchase of North Devon Red Bus and Southern National in April 1999 — could be made redundant.

Most of the routes are tendered, but they also include the 315 (Barnstaple-Bideford-Torrington-Exeter), which First took on commercially in March after Stagecoach Devon registered it commercially when First's contract with Devon came up for renewal (*Buses May*). Stagecoach instead started the three-times daily X55 (Exeter-Tiverton-Barnstaple) on 30 May and extended it to Bideford on Saturdays from 12 August.

Ironically, investment by Devon County Council and some operators has increased bus passenger numbers across the county from 18.2million two years ago to 20.1million. The council is

issuing tenders for the routes that First is giving up and is confident that most can be replaced. Margaret Rogers, its executive member for environment, believes some may even be improved. 'We are hopeful that, after this period of operator changes, we will end up with a reliable network of services in north and west Devon, and some better vehicles, but operated by a number of different bus companies,' she says.

Council leader Brian Greenslade adds: 'I would hope that as many as possible of the bus drivers who are now under notice from First might be able to transfer to new operators.'

Stagecoach — which replaced First in May on other tendered routes including Torquay-Dartmouth — has been advertising for staff for a new depot it plans to open in north Devon and the cuts may also be an opportunity for further expansion by smaller operators. Filers Travel, which used to compete against First, has taken over two local services in Ilfracombe. M&H Coaches has taken over the Barnstaple-Lynton services, while Turner's Tours of Chumleigh has taken over two Barnstaple locals and is operating service 377 (Barnstaple-Chumleigh-Crediton-Exeter), with additional commercial journeys at its southern end.

**Below:** Turner's K892 CSX, an Alexander Dash-bodied Dennis Dart new to Epsom Coaches, operating route 377 (Barnstaple-Exeter).



**Left:** With support from the East Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty's sustainable development fund, Stagecoach Devon has increased capacity on its commercial service 157 (Exmouth-Sidmouth) by replacing Mercedes-Benz 709D minibuses with two Plaxton Pointer-bodied Dennis Darts including 32064 (N64 KBW). They are branded as the CoastHopper 157 and are the first Stagecoach vehicles to be painted in the Jurassic Coast livery worn by First's X53 (Exeter-Bournemouth) double-deckers.



# Olympus will be East Lancs double-decker of Esteem

East Lancs has named its forthcoming new double-deck body the Olympus. It shares many features with the recently launched Esteem single-decker (*Buses June*) and the open-top Visionaire also in development.

Besides an already announced order from Ham's of Flimwell, East Sussex for a fully-seatbelted example, three are going to Delaine Buses for its Bourne-Peterborough services (*artist's impression pictured*), while Dublin operators Dualway and Morton's have each ordered

a seatbelted example for their private hire fleets. Dualway also expects the first Visionaire.

All seven will be on Euro4-engined Volvo B9TL chassis, which East Lancs will body in 10.3m and 10.9m lengths. It also plans to replace the Scania N94UD OmniDekka with the Olympus on 10.6m and 11.9m five-cylinder Euro4-engined N270UD chassis, as well as the VDL DB250 at 10.3m, 10.8m and possibly a longer variant in development. It will be offered on the Dennis Enviro400, though

Alexander Dennis has taken no orders yet for it with bodywork other than its own.

As with the existing East Lancs range, the new body uses the Alcan bolted aluminium structure and a thin composite inter-deck floor that maintains a low overall height yet meets Transport for

London's 6ft upper saloon headroom requirement.



## Stagecoach and GNER launch Peterborough taxibus



**Above:** GNER Ford Transit taxibus NH06 YED — 49804 in Stagecoach's Cambridgeshire fleet — at Peterborough station. **STEVEN KNIGHT**

Great North Eastern Railway and Stagecoach have begun a two-year trial of a demand responsive weekday taxibus service in Peterborough.

GNER is investing £200,000 in the experimental 20min frequency service, which operates from 06.00 to 09.00 and from 17.00 to 21.00 between the fast growing Hampton suburb and Peterborough railway station. Passengers must book morning front door pick-ups by 17.00 the previous day, while evening passengers have until noon that day to book. Journey times are

approximately 12min each way and GNER promises pick-ups within a 13min margin. Fares are £3 single, with savings for season ticket holders, who may book up to a year in advance.

The train company has provided two wheelchair lift-equipped Ford Transits for the service, which Stagecoach operates on its behalf. Stagecoach has also extended its parallel Citi 6 bus service to the railway station and Peterborough City Council is part subsidising it on Saturdays when the taxibus does not operate.

## Minister kick-starts Diamond Enviro300s

Transport minister Stephen Ladyman launched Stagecoach's upgraded East Kent coastal routes between Dover and Canterbury on 16 July.

In addition to government Kick-Start funding to help expand these

commercial services, Stagecoach has invested £850,000 in eight 12.5m Alexander Dennis Enviro300 48-seat low-floor buses and has rebranded routes 13 and 15 as Diamond, continuing a theme begun with Loop and Triangle-

branded routes in East Kent. Dover District and Kent County Council have invested a further £220,000 in infrastructure. Together with other improvements, Diamond buses provide a generally half-hourly service between Dover, Deal,

Ramsgate and Canterbury, with improved connections to the villages of Eythorne, Eastry, Aylesham, Elvington and Whitfield.

In Cambridge, Stagecoach launched the third phase of a £2.4million Kick-Start initiative on 24 July by doubling to every 10min the frequency of its Citi 7 cross-city route between Cottenham and Duxford, with an hourly off-peak extension to Saffron Walden. It also put four new Pointer Darts on new service Uni4 connecting university sites with the city centre and Addenbrooke's Hospital.

Stagecoach East is following the March rebranding of its Bedford-Hitchin service as Mars with five more planet names for interurban routes from Bedford. That to Northampton becomes Pluto, Cranfield is Venus, Luton is Saturn, Dunstable is Jupiter and Kettering is Mercury.



**Left:** Diamond-branded Enviro300 27520 (GX06 DZB) at Cliffe. **MARK LYONS**



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 **CORGI**



# Macquarie restores old brand names to London fleets

Australian-owned Macquarie Bank is returning the Stagecoach London companies to the identities they carried before they were privatised in 1994.

They will trade again as East London and Selkent, in an all-red livery with the Thames barge and bunch of hops logos that they carried from their formation by London Buses in 1989. In line with the new owner's policy, buses will carry no reference to Macquarie.

Although the sale may not be completed until late September, Stagecoach began removing its fleetnames during July, and by early August had repainted two Dennis Trident double-deckers with the new logos and fleetnames. Although the logos

are virtually identical to those used before, the fleetnames appear in serif upper and lower case lettering, while London Buses applied them in sans serif capitals. Management of the two businesses will continue to be based at East London's Ilford head office and they will buy support services — mainly financial — from Stagecoach until they set up their own systems. For now, buses retain Stagecoach fleetnumbers.

Although there were no London buses in Stagecoach's 2006/07 new vehicle programme, it has since ordered 18 Alexander Dennis vehicles — 10 Enviro400 double-deckers and eight Enviro200 Dart single-

deckers — on behalf of Macquarie for Selkent to use on

Transport for London route contracts won recently from First.



**Above and below:** The new names on Tridents 17093 (T693 KPU) and 17965 (LX53 JZH).

**Below:** The old East London fleetname on a London Buses Leyland Titan.



## New identity starts appearing in Yorkshire

Transdev is applying corporate fleetnames to buses acquired with the Blazefield fleets in January. First to be treated are the Harrogate & District, Yorkshire Coastliner and Keighley & District businesses in

Yorkshire. They retain existing livery styles and, in the case of route branded Yorkshire Coastliner

and Harrogate & District double-deckers, their prominent side fleetnames. These are

complemented, however, by the French group's name in blue and local names in green, in similar style to the Yellow Buses operation in Bournemouth, or else all in white, as in London. *Pictures by DANIEL STAZICKER*



*Picture: MARK LYONS*



Go-Ahead is repainting its recently acquired Birmingham Coach Company fleet in a simplified Diamond Bus livery without black roofs or stripes above the red skirt. Plaxton Pointer 2-bodied Dennis Dart SLF V391 SVV was among the vehicles acquired with the yellow People's Express fleet in March. **BEN MORROLL**



# First celebrates Eastern Counties' 75th birthday



**Above:** VR303 undergoing restoration last year to its 1973 NBC poppy red livery.

A newly restored 33ft early Bristol VRT will help First Eastern Counties mark the 75th anniversary of the formation of its predecessor, the Eastern Counties Omnibus Company, on 2 September.

VR303 (LFS 303F), one of 30 Scottish Bus Group VRs sent to Eastern Counties in 1973 in exchange for Bristol Lodekka FLFs, will work four-and-a-half round trips on Norwich cross-city service 19/20 (Hartsease-Costessey). One of twenty-five 33ft long 83-seat VRT/LLs built for Eastern Scottish in 1968 (12 of which went to Eastern Counties), it will operate the 10.02 service 20 departure to Costessey, leaving there at 10.33, becoming the 11.27 service 19 from Hartsease, which leaves Costessey at 12.19. It will then work the 13.12 service 20 from Hartsease to the city centre, the 14.17 service 19 from the city centre to Costessey, leaving there at 14.49, leaving Hartsease as a 20 at 15.42 and finally leaving Costessey at 16.33 as a 20 to Hartsease.

First also plans to operate red Routemaster RML2480 on two return journeys over former service

5 (Great Yarmouth-Norwich) via Potter Heigham, Horning and Wroxham in the Norfolk Broads. Journey time is 1hr 45min each way, departing Market Gates bus station, Yarmouth (stand F) at 09.00 and 14.00, returning from St Stephens Street, Norwich (stand F) at 11.00 and 16.00.

Free circular tours of Norwich city centre (including the former head office and works site on Thorpe Road) will leave the railway station hourly between 10.00 and 16.00. Subject to availability, five preserved Eastern Counties Bristols — a 1949 L, the 1951 LSX prototype, a 1959 MW, a 1962 Lodekka FL and a 1972 ex-Ribble VRT — will operate them.

The following day, a heritage Routemaster will operate an hourly service between the railway station, city centre and the Royal Norfolk Showground where a commemorative display forms part of the annual bus rally. These will leave the station between 10.00 and 12.00, and between 12.00 and 17.00, calling at St Stephens Street (stand D) 10min later and leaving the showground on the half hours.

**Below:** In First ownership, Scottish buses continue to be transferred to Eastern Counties. One of the latest arrivals in Norwich from First Glasgow is 61368 (L309 VSU), an Alexander Strider-bodied Volvo B10B new to Kelvin Central in 1993. **GRAHAME BESSEY**



## East Yorkshire kicks off its 80th anniversary

East Yorkshire Motor Services — one of the last ex-National Bus Company subsidiaries still in independent control — reaches its 80th anniversary in October, but is kick-starting the celebrations with a special free exhibition being staged at the Streetlife Transport Museum in

Hull from 11.00 to 16.00 on 23 September, the day before EFE Showbus International at Duxford, Cambridgeshire. Besides the museum's normal attractions, including trams and stagecoaches, special exhibits will include preserved and modern East Yorkshire vehicles.

**Below:** Fifty-year-old East Yorkshire 'Beverley Bar' AEC Regent V 644 (VKH 44) has been helping operate heritage Sunday bus trips from Hull (see p62) this summer. Its Willowbrook body was specially shaped to allow it to pass through the North Bar in Beverley.



## Plymouth plans Atlantean farewell day

Plymouth Citybus is teaming up with the Plymouth City Transport Preservation Group to mark the end of 46 years of Leyland Atlantean operation with a running day on 15 October. The council-owned bus company will hand over its last working Atlantean, 1981 East Lancs-bodied 171 (TTT 171X), to the preservation group that day. They also plan to operate preserved Atlanteans on free services radiating from a city centre site yet to be finalised as we closed for press. For further details, e-mail [enquiries@plymouthcitytransport.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@plymouthcitytransport.co.uk)

**Below:** The PCT Preservation Group's latest restoration is of Roe-bodied Atlantean AN68A/1R 131 (STK 131T), which appeared at the Plymouth Hoe rally in July. **CHRIS CARTER**





## Preston Bus quits coach market

Employee-owned Preston Bus pulled out of the day excursion market at the end of June and is selling its solitary coach. Although the excursion programme had a regular clientele, engineering director Jack Hornby says changes in tachograph rules and introduction of the working time directive

made it too expensive to continue, particularly as there were no dedicated coach drivers and work was allocated to any of the company's bus drivers. It bought its last coach, a Van Hool-bodied Volvo B10M, in 2003 and kept it in the colours of former owner Bassett's of Tittensor.

Picture by ROY MARSHALL



## Travel London Dart winners

The five winners of our July competition for Creative Master Northcord's Travel London Mini Pointer Dart 1: 76-scale diecast models were Graham Cooper of Rainham in Essex, Neville Garland of Newport, Derek Higgs of Dartford, Barry Le Jeune of Haywards Heath and A. Moore of Crawley. Congratulations to you all for knowing that a real-life MPD is 8.8m long, Travel London is a sister company of Travel West Midlands and the western terminus of route C1 is Kensington High Street.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

**All open-top** tour buses in Bath must have Euro3 low emission engines by April 2008 under controls announced by senior traffic commissioner Philip Brown.

**LDV**, the Birmingham-based minibus and van manufacturer, has been acquired by Russian vehicle manufacturer GAZ International.

**Fastrack**, the Kent Thameside bus rapid transit service, has carried 500,000 passengers since opening on 26 March. It is running two months ahead of target.

**Wilts & Dorset** commercial director Andrew Whickham is the senior manager in last month's Pictureview photograph of one of the company's World Cup buses, not managing director Alex Carter.

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## New heads for Nexus and Centro



Two passenger transport executives have new top men. **Bernard Garner** (top left) succeeds **Mike Parker** (below left) as director general at Nexus (Tyne & Wear). He joined the PTE in 1985, became its director of development in 1999 and was acting DG after his predecessor left in July to join a small private company. Mike Parker was the PTE's longest serving DG and, as well as being responsible for changing its name to Nexus, is also credited with renaming West Midlands PTE — where he held senior posts from 1988 to 2004 — as Centro. He began his career with London Transport.



**Geoff Inskip** has become chief executive of both Centro and the West Midlands Passenger Transport Authority. He was previously deputy DG at Greater Manchester PTE and besides succeeding former Centro DG **Rob Donald**, who has retired, he also takes over committee clerk PTA duties carried out previously by the Coventry City Council chief executive.

## TGM chief succeeds Chris Moyes at GoSkills

Former Go-Ahead chief executive **Chris Moyes**, who resigned in July following an undisclosed illness, has also stepped down as chairman of GoSkills, the sector skills training council for the passenger transport industry. Tellings-Golden Miller chairman and chief executive **Stephen Telling** has stepped in as acting chairman pending appointment of a permanent successor.



GoSkills chief executive Peter Huntington says: 'We are desperately sad that Chris has had to step down as our chairman. He is widely regarded as one of the most able and visionary of the senior people in the industry. His contribution to GoSkills has been immense and we

**Left:** Chris Moyes taking delivery of Go-Ahead's first Alexander Dennis Enviro400s in April shortly before illness forced him to give up work.

Picture: JOHN ALDRIDGE

shall all miss his wise counsel and support. We wish him and his family well at what must be a very difficult time.'

Chris Moyes also is this year's Omnibus Society president. Go North East managing director **Peter Huntley**, who will chair the proceedings in his absence at the society's presidential weekend on 2/3 September, intends to use the presidential dinner as an opportunity to 'mark the contribution he has made, and the integrity, enthusiasm and professionalism of a special man'.

## Ex-Potteries man joins TAS board

The TAS Partnership has promoted principal consultant **Andy Foster** to become an associate director. He has 20 years' experience in the bus industry and was operations director with First Potteries before joining the TAS team in 2003.

## Ken Beard, Gloucestershire operator

Cinderford, Gloucestershire-based coach operator **Ken Beard**, founder of the K. W. Beard business, died on 7 July only 10 weeks after the death of his son, David. He was 83 and had lived in Littledean all of his life.

On leaving school, he worked on several local farms and to supplement his income he acquired a taxi in his 20s. His first minibus (non-PSV) arrived in 1957 when the taxi business was awarded a contract to transport staff to a local hospital, and he attained PSV status in 1959 when another minibus arrived.

The coach fleet developed steadily through the 1960s and 1970s, after David Beard joined the business. The first proper operating centre was at Steam Mills, near Cinderford, then moved to premises vacated by Moseleys (Gloucester) Ltd in Cinderford itself, where the business remains today. Beard's became a regular sub-contractor to National Travel for services from Cheltenham.

The limited company was formed in 1980 and took on some local bus services following Red & White retrenchment in the Forest of Dean in the early 1980s, but it gradually gave this work up during the late-1990s. The family hopes to continue the business.

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# First plans bid for Connexxion

FirstGroup says it will bid to take control of Connexxion, the Dutch state-owned bus, tram, train and ferry operator, which is being prepared for privatisation.

If it succeeds, this would be its first move into mainland Europe and it would use Connexxion as the bridgehead for further expansion across the continent. Earlier privatisation led the way for Arriva and French-owned Veolia to acquire significant shares of the Dutch bus market, primarily in the north and south of the Netherlands. Connexxion, which operates 2,500 buses and trolleybuses in its main public transport division, a further 400 in its Hermes division and a 275-vehicle coach tours business, grew out of the Dutch railways' bus operations. It also operates two trains, 27 trams and 15 ferries.

The Dutch government intends to sell two thirds of the shares in Connexxion, which has turned



**Left:** One of 85 compressed natural gas-fuelled MAN Lion's City A51 buses that Connexxion operates in Haarlem. The MAN we illustrated last month was one of 117 Turkish-built MANs. **HARRY LAMING**

past losses into operating profits, with the remaining third being sold after five years. First, which has been seeking a European acquisition opportunity for some time to complement its British and

North American operations, envisages using Connexxion's headquarters at Hilversum as the base for further bus and rail acquisitions in Europe. It would appoint Connexxion chairman

Peter Kortenhorst to its board. Besides other major public transport groups, the Dutch-owned Rabobank is also believed to be interested in bidding for the business.

## Arriva interest puts Tide on the rise in Norway

Two of Norway's biggest transport operators, Gaia Trafikk and HSD Buss, have merged to form a new undertaking called Tide with a combined fleet of 1,040 vehicles. The deal went ahead after Bergen municipality — Gaia's largest shareholder — asked for more time to consider a rival takeover offer from Arriva, which it then rejected.

Tide will have 3,000 employees and expects to carry around 39million passengers a year, most

of them in Bergen — the country's second largest city with a population of around 225,000. Before the new company can start trading officially on 1 October, Norway's competition authorities must approve the merger.

Gaia Trafikk was formed from the 1998 merger of Pan Trafikk, the bus company serving northern and southern Bergen, and Bergen Sporvei, which ran in the inner city area. Gaia's current fleet of 400

includes eight trolleybuses, which operate Norway's only trolleybus system introduced to Bergen in 1950.

HSD Buss, the bus subsidiary of the old-established steamship company Hardanger Sunnhordlankse Dampskipsselskap (HSD), operates over 600 buses and coaches on stage carriage and express services throughout western and southern Norway.

## DelGro grows in Oz

The Singapore-based ComfortDelGro Corporation — owner of Metroline in London — has expanded its bus interests in Australia by paying £3million for a 29-vehicle operator serving the western suburbs of Sydney.

ComfortDelGro Cabcharge, its 51%-owned joint venture which nine months earlier bought Westbus from the National Express Group, has added Holroyd Bus Lines. The deal takes its share of the western Sydney bus market from 52% to 66% and group chief executive Kua Hong Pak says it is continuing to seek growth organically and by acquisitions.

## Australian bank buys NZ bus operator

Bancorp, an Australian merchant bank, has paid around £8million for a 74% stake in Mana Coach Services, a 100-vehicle operator serving the northern part of the New Zealand city of Wellington.

Bancorp managing director Craig Brownlie cites rising fuel and car parking charges, which are driving an 8 to 10% growth in bus passenger numbers, as a reason for making what he says will be a long term investment in the company. Managing director Kerry Waddell, who says her family is selling the shareholding for 'family reasons', is confident that the new owner will maintain Mana's growth, but adds: 'There is growth, but a

lot of that is at peak time, so that requires more buses.'

The remaining 26% shareholding is already held by New Zealand investment company Infratil, which last year bought Stagecoach's bus operations in Wellington and Auckland, and which has first right of refusal should Bancorp wish to sell its shareholding in the future. Three weeks before the Bancorp deal was agreed, the country's High Court ruled against an Infratil bid to buy all of Mana. Executive Paul Ridley-Smith says it will appeal against that decision and, if successful, would try again to buy Mana. 'There is no doubt Mana is

a good-quality asset,' he says. 'If we can get in the position [to make another bid], we would look at it.'

Mana runs more than 100 buses in northern Wellington, from Newlands and Johnsonville to the Kapiti Coast, while Infratil-owned Stagecoach serves central Wellington and Hutt Valley, operating trolleybuses as well as diesels in the central area. This deal underlines Australasian investors' growing interest in buying bus companies, coming only weeks after Australian-owned Macquarie — which tried to buy Stagecoach's New Zealand buses — struck a £263million deal to buy the UK group's London buses.

## Iveco sells Ashok Leyland stake

Iveco — Fiat's bus and truck division — has sold its 30% stake in Ashok Leyland, the Indian bus and truck manufacturer. The Hinduja Group, which already had a 51% stake in Ashok Leyland, has acquired the Iveco shareholding, ending a partnership dating back to 1987, when the two parties bought the business from the UK's Rover Group.



# End of the line for Kenya Bus Services?

After five years of struggling under the burden of heavy losses and debt, Kenya Bus Services bowed out of the capital city of Nairobi in July after 72 years. However, a successor business appeared to have surfaced within eight days of the closure.

Founded in 1934, KBS became part of BET's United Transport group, before being acquired by Stagecoach in 1991, when the UK group was investing in African bus companies. It was resold to local interests in 1998 and since then has been beset by competition and new rules. Since about 2001, it traded in Nairobi under the Bustrack name.

The successor firm, called Kenya Bus Service Management, began operations with 12 buses and was talking of adding a further 10 every week. The company says it is not related to the collapsed KBS, but told the *Nairobi Standard* newspaper that it is recruiting 'most' of its key staff, i.e. drivers and inspectors. The

managing director, a Mr Mukabana, says the new company is employing a 'unique' franchise model, where investors lease their buses to KBSM. Three investors have already signed up and the company appears to be using former Bustrack vehicles.

While KBS operated under a franchise that required fixed routes and times, its demise could result in anyone working after 21.30 having to take a taxi to get home.

The *Standard* blames the Kenyan government for the bus company's difficulties, first by legalising matatus (the Kenya form of paratransit) in 1973, then introducing Nyayo buses in 1986 and finally allowing competitors into the central business district. One such competitor, Citi Hoppa, came on to the streets in 2003, and in 2004 the so-called Michuki Rules were introduced, which, among other measures, banned standing passengers, required seatbelts for all and demanded the removal of the second door.



**Above:** A Bustrack-branded ERF Trailblazer with Labh Singh body, bought when Stagecoach owned the business. **Pictures by MALCOLM CHASE**

**Below:** A Citi Hoppa Nissan minibus in central Nairobi.



## German cities see supersize Citaro as shuttle solution

Operators in two German cities are poised to buy the new four-axle Mercedes-Benz CapaCity for university shuttle routes after the 19.5m four-axle version of the articulated Citaro toured the country on a demonstration programme.

The second prototype CapaCity, which carries 46 seated and 134 standing passengers, visited Hamburg, Aachen, Wiesbaden and Essen, but interest was strongest in Kaiserslautern and Potsdam, near Berlin. Kaiserslautern is keen on such high-capacity crush-loaders for the busy route

between the city's university campus and main railway station after an extension to the S-Bahn commuter railway was rejected on cost grounds.

'With its own bus lane and equipped with traffic-light priority system, this bus is in no way inferior to a track-bound vehicle in terms of speed and it costs considerably less,' says Wolfgang Herzog, managing director of the city's TWK-Verkehrs undertaking. He says a decision is imminent on buying one or possibly two CapaCities.

Thomas Wiedner at Havelbus Verkehrsgesellschaft in

Potsdam, says the CapaCity is ideal on routes where one articulated bus is too small, but where it is uneconomical to run two vehicles. 'At peak times, I have to deploy two buses to take students to the university and one comes back empty. A higher-capacity vehicle would save me 16km on each trip,' he argues. 'We really are very interested in this vehicle, which seems to be tailor-made to our needs.'

The super artic is likely to sell for around £285,000 when prices are announced in the autumn.

## Euro money for new Lithuanian trolleybuses

The European Bank for Reconstruction & Development is continuing its support for the restructuring and modernisation of public transport in Kaunas, Lithuania's second largest city, with a loan of up to £10million to the municipal trolleybus company, Autrolis, to finance 50 new trolleybuses and associated infrastructure.

£3.4million of the loan will be syndicated to the Danish HSH Nordbank and Nordea Bank Finland. The EBRD has been involved in public transport sector reform in Kaunas since 2004, when it signed a £6.8million loan with the municipal motorbus company, Kauno Autobusai, and provided significant support in structuring a public service contract between the city and the company. The Kauno Autobusai contract introduced competitiveness and transparency in the public transport sector, leading the trolleybus and motorbus companies to provide complementary services.

Wright Group has restyled the body used by its American partner, Optima Bus, for a recently won order for 300 midibuses from Miami-Dade in Florida. The body retains the distinctive Wright's windscreen, but with a much more raked front than before..



## Solaris goes hybrid

Polish manufacturer Solaris plans to launch a diesel-electric hybrid version of its Urbino18 low-floor articulated bus in September. It will have a Cummins ISLe4 8.9litre engine, Allison Ev-Drive and roof-mounted batteries.





# It's been a game of two halves

Recent bus news seems to have mirrored England's lacklustre World Cup performance, though some isolated sparks of genius offer hope for the future

**T**he World Cup is over at last, thank goodness, but much of the recent news from the bus world seems about as depressing as was England's performance. Often for the same sort of reasons: highly-paid and presumably talented people and organisations not meshing together as a team — in fact, not seeming even to be aiming towards the same goal half the time. Does any other supposedly civilised country make such a mess of its transport policy (or its football, for that matter)?

My exasperation this month is levelled mainly at Ealing Council, Birmingham City Council, the New Tories . . . and Ken Livingstone (just to be even-handed).

Red cards for a start to both Ealing Council and Birmingham City Council, for brutal and cynical tackles from behind. Ealing, which has already come out against the West London Transit tram plan, now proposes to suspend some bus lanes for 18 months, the idea being, apparently, to see if they have added to congestion and pollution. Peter Hendy at Transport for London is, not surprisingly, 'deeply concerned' — presumably diplomat-speak for 'furious'. Meanwhile, Birmingham has scrapped the proposed Hagley Road bus showcase scheme on the grounds that it wouldn't be a prudent use of council resources. I expect Birmingham readers of *Buses* could quickly come up with far worse examples of the council's use of public resources than this.

Both of these decisions emanate from new Conservative-led councils. Neither gives much confidence in David Cameron's new Tories, although Chris Grayling, the new shadow transport secretary, seems to take his brief seriously and has already announced a review of rail policy. He seems in favour of some sort of return to integrated

operations, thank goodness. What will he make of York and 'ftr', I wonder, if he ever gets round to looking at buses? I'm tempted to award Andrew Braddock a yellow card for going up there, writing about it for this column last month, and depressing us so much. First's bosses must have thought long and hard before going ahead with the launch. Do they still think they made the right decision?

My eye was also caught by the welcome given by the PTEs to Ken Livingstone's comments on BBC1's *The Politics Show*, where he called for greater regulation within the bus industry. A yellow card for you, Ken, I'm afraid. Great player, but you're dribbling in someone else's game. You've done a good if expensive job in London, but you well know that London's a special case. Mike Cooper, Arriva's ex-easyJet man, summed it up succinctly in his recent evidence to the House of Commons transport committee. 'Can I scotch this myth about London once and for all?' he said. 'Commuting habits are different, cost and availability of car parking is different, there is a congestion charge, London has seen population growth . . . You cannot say the two are the same, I'm sorry.'

## Encouraging signs for the future

But there have been a couple of really encouraging things, too, which I think deserve the most attention — the government's agreement to contribute £92.5million of the £116.2million cost of the Cambridgeshire guided busway, and Stagecoach's achievement of 2.1% passenger growth outside London in the past year.

The government gets my Roman Abramovich Award for Stumping up the Cash (even if it's yours and mine) for what will be

the world's longest guided busway when it opens at the end of 2008, if Cambridgeshire can find the balance of money from developers and get it built on time. This is a real opportunity, dear to me since I was involved in its earlier incarnation in my Stagecoach days, to propel Cambridgeshire — and the UK — straight to the top of the Premier League as far as BRT (bus rapid transit) is concerned. Look back at January 2005 *Buses* for Alan Millar's full account (*The Busway Comes of Age*). I am confident Cambridgeshire County Council will do a good job of this, and I hope that all parties will give their full commitment to the high quality standards the council will need to insist on if the project is to be fully successful, and to act as a beacon for the rest of the country.

My Man of the Match Award goes to Stagecoach for its continued commitment to passenger growth. Its UK Bus managing director, Les Warneford, told the House of Commons committee: 'It's been very hard work and it's not universal,' but the result has been annual growth over the past two or three years of around 2%, despite increasing cost pressures and the continuing effects of congestion. This is a real case of midfield graft paying dividends. Stagecoach's recent sale of its London operations to Australia's Macquarie Bank means that all its bus eggs in the UK are now in the provincial growth basket. Les Warneford's views on the re-regulation debate were very clear: 'I don't believe a change in who decides the timetable will carry any more passengers. The real challenge is that we have rising car ownership.' Stagecoach's results demand that he is listened to.

Finally, my Paul Gascoigne Award goes to TAS Partnership founder Peter Huntley, now the MD at Go North East. He says he will quit if he can't stem passenger loss there. Will it be tears or glory? Let's hope it's the latter.

Let's hope too, that the House of Commons transport committee focuses on goal-scoring strategies such as these in its current investigation into the bus industry, and consigns the sterile and negative Sven-Göran Eriksson tactics of the re-regulation debate to the bench. I fear, though, that's about as likely as England winning the *next* World Cup . . .

**Left:** Brian Cox argues that our transport policymakers need to match the winning ways of Italy's world championship football team, which undertook a World Cup victory tour of Rome aboard one of 22 open-top Irisbus CityClass double-deckers in the city's Trambus fleet. Normally painted red, it was redecorated in blue for this emotional event. **IRISBUS**





# Get the Pleasure!

The illustration shows the C.40.7 Display Cabinet etched London Transport with the matching London Transport door moulding. Inside Dimensions 20.6" High x 40" Wide x 2 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>" Deep with 7 spaces @ 71mm (6 glass shelves 4mm thick) available with and without the etching, other etchings available, Greenline and the Roundal logo.



The illustration shows the A.28.8.S70 Display Cabinet. Inside Dimensions 31" High x 28" Wide x 2 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>" Deep with 8 spaces @ 95mm (7 glass shelves 4mm thick)



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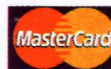
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# Further expansion for London bus network

The pace may be slower than in recent years, and costs may reflect substantial increases in fuel, insurance costs, wages and much else, but London bus services are continuing to expand.

Figures from Go-Ahead-owned London Central/London General show how costly in staff terms these can be, whether they involve more realistic layover times or improved Sunday services. The spectacular win from Arriva London South from April of routes 68/468/X68/N68 with work for almost 50 buses needed nearly 160 extra drivers at London Central's Camberwell garage. That was covered partly by moving route C10 (Victoria-Canada Water) from Camberwell to New Cross the previous month, but Camberwell also needed extra drivers for three new contracts.

The takeover of route 200 (Raynes Park-Mitcham) from Centra took 15 buses and 47 drivers, while minor improvements for new contracts in the Wandsworth network pushed the total extra requirement to 60 drivers. Stockwell's wins of the 196 (Norwood Junction-Elephant & Castle) and 315 (West Norwood-Balham Station) from Travel London raised its driver complement by nearly 80. By the end of this year, Stockwell — with 650 drivers — will become the largest London General garage, while Camberwell will have over 560, New Cross just over 500 and Merton 490.

While we are talking big numbers, Metrobus is back in its greatly modernised garage at Green Street Green, near Orpington, with an allocation of 162 buses. Just a mile or two up the road from there is Selkent's 70-bus Bromley garage at Bromley Common.

**Above: London General has begun evaluating B9 (BX06 BTF), a Euro4-engined Volvo B9TL with Wright Eclipse Gemini body photographed at Vauxhall on route 87, which until recently was the 77A. RUSSELL YOUNG**



Impressive though these figures seem, some will increase farther ready for the extended congestion charging zone. The London Omnibus Traction Society calculates that London General will need 18 more buses to strengthen existing services it runs in the area. The biggest boost of all will come with new service 452 (Wandsworth Road Station-Kensal Green) for which Travel London has just ordered 27 new 10.1m Alexander Dennis Enviro400 double-deckers.



**Above: A temporary expansion of the bus network has seen Travel London start operating route ELS (Shoreditch-Whitechapel) to replace East London Line Underground trains while this branch is rebuilt and extended north to Dalston Junction. Optare Solo S252 (YP02 LCF) is one of the buses branded for this four-vehicle route. RUSSELL YOUNG**

## Want a timetable? Don't ask the enquiry office

The enquiry office at West Croydon bus station displays one of the strangest notices I have ever seen. It says that photocopies of bus timetables are not available there. If you want one, you must phone a number and they will send it to you. 'This is company policy,' it adds. I find it amazing that a local enquiry office can't give you a timetable. I thought that was what they were for. After all, enquiry offices no longer sell Travelcards or Bus Passes.

Besides being ridiculous, this also seems expensive. There has to be someone at the other end of the phone to take your name and address, and said person must put the timetable or timetables in an envelope, which has to carry a postage stamp.

I have to say that publicity for London bus services seems to be taking a backward step except — oddly enough — on the Underground. More tube stations are offering spider maps of all bus services in their immediate locality — and you don't have to ring up for them. But on the bus side, some timetable leaflets have been produced only for route changes, but until now enquiry offices have had available photocopies of local route timetables.

Also on the way out are the 60 to 90-page A5-sized *Local Journey Planner* booklets,

which covered individual areas with times and spider maps. They were commendably widely distributed to local households, and were valued by enthusiasts. But in the three years or so between each issue, some parts went out of date and they cannot have been cheap to produce. Another new expense is the stop-specific timetable, now displayed everywhere. In place of the booklets, local travel information will in future be included in Yellow Pages phone directories, which seems a strange place to find it. But, true to their promise, pages 18 to 33 of the new Croydon area Yellow Pages — delivered as I write this — does indeed include Underground, tram and local bus spider maps and information.

I am pleased to report, though, that new editions of the London bus maps are now out for all four areas, North East, North West, South East and South West, plus the Central London one. They include the planned revision of the Croydon Tramlink network, which finally took place at the end of July . . . though the Croydon Yellow Pages map doesn't even mention it.

The Tramlink changes see New Addington trams working through to Wimbledon every 7/8min, while Elmers End and Beckenham Junction trams turn round on the Croydon loop.

## Are statistics creating unnecessary gaps?

Up to the 1950s there was a different attitude to problems if a scheduled bus was missing, whether through breakdown, staff sickness or anything else. On a route with, say, a 10min frequency, the inspector in charge would hold back the bus before the missing one by 3min and bring forward the times of the one after the gap.

Most crews were reasonably happy with the arrangement, particularly those of the following bus who wouldn't have a 'double road' to contend with. Clearly this isn't a solution when a complete route is in difficulty, and turning short is the only solution. But sometimes that doesn't seem to happen, and I've seen three buses or more trailing each other to a terminus. That may be good for the 'scheduled miles operated' statistic and perhaps the way statistics are compiled encourages this. But it isn't kind to waiting passengers. While due regard must be paid to scheduled meal breaks and legal requirements, fresh thought could perhaps be given to the way the statistics are compiled.

One step in the right direction is the creation of a new grade of road official by London Central/London General. Known as regulators, 10 are now responsible for ensuring punctual departures at termini. They work between 07.30 and 21.30 and are responsible to road managers. Their post will become part of the career path to becoming controllers.





Operating the park-&-ride service to the London Motor Show in Docklands in July were Ensignbus RT624 (JXC 432) and RT4421 (NXP 775), Weymann-bodied AEC Regent 3RTs dating from 1948 and 1954 respectively. **RUSSELL YOUNG**



Arriva London DLA125 (T325 FGN), an Alexander ALX400-bodied DAF DB250, embarked on a UK-wide tour on 8 July to help promote the 2012 Olympic Games. The tour began at the National Sports Stadium at Crystal Palace. **RICHARD GODFREY**

## Fares evasion on artics continues to alarm

Six times as much revenue is being lost on one route operated by articulated buses compared to another route in the same area worked by double-deckers. The figures were revealed in a reply to a Conservative member of the London Assembly.

The 7% estimated fare evasion rate on the artic-operated 25 (Oxford Circus-Ilford) compared to 2.3% on the double-deck 86 (Stratford-Romford). The evasion rate is even starker in actual passenger numbers, as the 25 carried an estimated 20.3million in 2005/06 against 10.2million on the 86 — 1.4million apparently riding free on the artics, against 235,000 on the 86. According to the London Conservatives, the detected fare loss through evasion on the 86 was £10,000 to £12,000 against £62,000 to £73,000 on the 25.

These are alarming figures. Unfortunately, just having more revenue inspectors is not enough. As a minimum, any realistic ticket checking on an artic needs at least three

inspectors — one for each door. But inspectors' powers are limited and the most successful checks I have seen involve targeting every bus at a particular stop, with police support needed for those giving false names and addresses.

By chance, I have witnessed a couple of these well-staffed checks, one near Vauxhall Bridge, the other at Southall, both at stops served by artics. On the Vauxhall check, I was surprised that there were three passengers with non-valid or no tickets on an averagely loaded artic mid-morning.

Comprehensive checks such as these are expensive in police time, and are liable to come to an abrupt end if the police are called away to greater problems elsewhere. Nor can I imagine such a check being carried out on a Friday night in Peckham. But if evasion on artics continues at this level, the gains from introducing such large capacity buses must also allow for substantial fare evasion.

## SHORT HOPS

The Edmonton Labour MP has castigated developers and Transport for London for delays in opening the new bus station at Edmonton Green. A dispute over the final design of entry and exit arrangements is part of the problem.

**Automatic top-up** of OysterCards now works on buses and trams as well as at tube and Docklands Light Railway stations. Once the card balance falls below £5, users can top up with £20 or £40 by touching any yellow card reader.

**Passenger satisfaction** with bus services is lower in London than in other metropolitan areas. The latest quarterly statistics produced by the Department for Transport show a level of 78% in London compared to 83% in the other conurbations.





# Whatever happened to...? ...Blue Bus of Bolton

A week may be a long time in politics, but a year is a positive age in the world of buses. In our September 2005 issue, we reported the sale of Blue Bus of Bolton to Arriva North West and the new owner's overnight replacement of Blue Bus fleetnames and fleetnumbers with its own. Last month no less, we announced the return of Blue Bus, albeit in Preston rather than Bolton.

There are busmen who just cannot resist running buses and clearly Roger Jarvis is one of them. A former Shearings man, he and a colleague founded Blue

Bus in 1991, operating out of part of the old railway works at Horwich. He became sole owner after his colleague was injured in a serious road accident and expanded it into a business that at one stage had over 100 buses (some bought new) and — in 1994-96 — a separate operation in Huddersfield.

Blue Bus came close to a member of the bus industry Establishment in 2002 when it bought the Lancashire United operations in Bolton from the Blazefield group, which had acquired them from Stagecoach a year earlier. Blue Bus and

Lancashire United had been competing on some routes and the sale was the latest chapter in the long and troubled story of what had been Ribble's garage in the town. Some say it was a move too far and that it precipitated the decision to sell out to Arriva. Blue Bus had also sourced several of its vehicles from Arriva's dealership in Gomersal.

The Blue Bus operation transferred to a revived Arriva Liverpool operator licence (no, Bolton is still in Greater Manchester) and most of the fleet has either been repainted or

replaced. The stated plan was to repaint everything by the end of last year, but at least one Dennis Lance was still running in two-tone blue in July. Most of the Lances have gone, including an ex-Stagecoach Carlisle flood victim, which was the last bus acquired before the sale and which entered service in Arriva aquamarine.

However, weep not for Blue Bus, for it is back running midibuses and a double-decker in Preston. Roger Jarvis has bought Whittaker's of Penwortham and rebranded it with an identity not a million miles off that of his old company.



**Below:** Scenes in Preston's doomed bus station on 8 July this year, with 'new' Blue Bus Mercedes-Benz 709D/Plaxton Beaver N910 ETM setting out for Frenchwood, while Arriva North West Dennis Lance/Alexander PS-type 1932 (J112 WSC) — 'old' Blue Bus 192 — is parked alongside 'new' Blue Bus Mercedes Vario P530 PNE. **MIKE HADDON**



## PILOTS FLY MORE THAN STRETCARS

It seems that the idea of calling First's 'ftr' StreetCar drivers 'pilots' isn't as ground-breaking or clever-clever as the Magenta People might think. For Simon Brown encountered this nomenclature on something a lot less sleek in the Indian city of Shimla over two

years ago. Should those same Indians introduce 'ftr' to their streets, their marketing people will need to address the negative connotations of 'pilot' and 'bus' and think up a more acceptable term for the men on the 'flight deck'. How about 'driver'?



## MAN CALLED 'TREE' TIES THE KNOT



His best man — former trades union rep Douglas Bailey — arranged for the Ribble Vehicle Preservation Trust to add a classic bus to the wedding photographs. While John wanted the Trust's Bristol RESL6L, it had been laid low with a bus bug and he was provided instead with Ribble 811, its newly restored Weymann-bodied Leopard. If John was disappointed, Julie wasn't. This immaculate DP is evidently her favourite.

In best man tradition, Douglas revealed that Ribble drivers at Chorley nicknamed John 'Tree' when he became their

operations manager. Why? Because he hid behind trees to check on their punctuality at points along the routes, springing out when they least expected it.

Hearty congratulations to one of Buses' most loyal supporters, Stagecoach Manchester network manager, John Young, and his bride Julie, who married in Skipton on 29 July.



## YOU WOULDN'T ADAM AND EVE IT

Nigel Barrett, who for a few more weeks is managing director of Stagecoach London, has had an interesting cultural challenge on his hands. He is transferring with his employees, vehicles and garages to Macquarie Bank, which is paying Stagecoach the equivalent of about three years' profit on the routes and is reviving the old East London and Selkent identities for the fleets either side of the River Thames.

While the sale to the Australians may have been as big a surprise to his employees as it was to the rest of us, it

wasn't to Nigel. Stagecoach had told him in strict confidence before offering him the transfer back from Carlisle to his native London. But it's the 'native London' bit that has posed the challenge when explaining it all to his drivers, engineers and other vital employees who, inevitably, wanted to know exactly who these Macquarie people are. 'They're merchant bankers,' he says, adding hastily, 'and I'm not speaking rhyming slang.' If you don't understand that one, I suggest you ask a Londoner born within the sound of Bow Bells.

## THREE-TRACK MINDS ARE NORMAL FOR NORFOLK

The pace of bus industry takeovers may be rendering paint and vinyls as Very Last Year. Why else would the three-track rear number blinds on this First Eastern Counties Olympian — one of the tri-axes previously in Glasgow, Manchester and Hong Kong — be showing three Arriva logos? Might they also turn to show Stagecoach beach balls, National Express twin peaks or even the First f? And if it comes up with three lemons,

do you hit the jackpot? My thanks to N. Mansfield for spotting this one.



## BOXED SET OF THE MONTH CORGI

If the nation's busiest urban bus routes are most likely to benefit from an upgrade along the lines of First's 'ftr', then rural Cornwall might as well resign itself to the 'pst' downgrade of an old VR boxed up and parachuted in on a rusty old deep sea container.

You might think that's what's going on here, but Western Greyhound managing director Mark Howarth — who wins this month's Corgi Original



Omnibus Company diecast for sending me an offbeat bus picture — has a more prosaic explanation. What you see is only the detachable ECW roof that used to belong to his VR, DCA 531X. Repainted red, it now belongs to another VR, ex-Southdown UWV 613S in the Summercourt Travel fleet.

Keep your eyes open and camera ready for your own offbeat colour picture opportunities and send the results to me at the **Leven address**. You, too, could win a Corgi diecast.

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# Enviro200 Dart aims for its target

Alexander Dennis has completed its new product line-up with the replacement for its best-selling Pointer Dart. **ALAN MILLAR** explains where it fits into a fast changing market

**A**lmost three years after TransBus International revealed its full low-floor offside rear-engined Enviro200 midibus prototypes, its successor — Alexander Dennis — has begun producing the new Enviro200 Dart. This model may look quite like the 2003 prototypes, but under the skin it more closely resembles the Pointer Dart that it has begun to replace.

Truth be told, it is even more like the Alexander ALX200-bodied Dart, developed in 1996 to compete against the Pointer and which ended up being shipped to the United States in the ultimately doomed Thomas Dennis joint venture between Mayflower (owner of Dennis and Alexander) and DaimlerChrysler. That happened after TransBus rationalised its model line-up in favour of the better selling Pointer. The new body uses the ALX structure, while the chassis has the Dart's T-drive layout.

Three years ago, TransBus convinced many of us that it had struck gold with the layout of the original Enviro200. The offset engine, super-single rear wheels and full-length flat floor combined with a rear rather than centre exit door to offer a midibus with a potentially less congested passenger flow. While we worried about the vulnerability of a rear exit door that opened beyond the length of the bus, we bought the message that this was a design revolution. Try telling that to Transport for London. It likes wheelchair users to board and alight through the middle doors. The Enviro200 was designed on the premise that they rolled on and off at the front. TfL wasn't convinced, nor did it fancy having two radically different layouts in its contractors' fleets. Given that the bus was designed primarily for the two-door London market, it was doomed to join the long list of clever ideas that never made it into production.

The diesel prototypes have largely disappeared from public view, although Alexander Dennis has repainted an Enviro200H diesel-electric hybrid in a fetching shade of green and remains keen to sell such ultra low-emission buses to anyone prepared to pay the king's ransom any manufacturer's hybrid will cost until they either become compulsory or a far sighted government sees the light and subsidises the purchase price.

All the while, competitors have been gnawing away at the market leadership the Dart enjoyed from its launch in step-entrance form in 1989 and as a low-floor bus from 1995. Its closest competitor is the VDL (née DAF) SB120, developed at Arriva's behest to assemble the Cummins/Allison driveline in a more robust form,



**Right: Rear view of the first of the 10.78m 37-seaters for Alliance & Leicester.**

and now sold by Volvo as well as VDL. The MAN 14.220 has won sales towards the longer end of the Dart range, while the Optare Solo gives it a brisk run for its money between 8.5m and 9.5m. Indeed, Dennis and Plaxton launched the Mini Pointer Dart to combat the Solo threat. The Pointer body also has a promising new competitor in the once-again-independent Plaxton's new Centro design, available initially on the SB120.

## Market has also contracted

As well as fragmenting, the market for Dart-sized buses has contracted, so although Alexander Dennis says it is 'confident and proud' that the new model will also be a market leader, it will be surprised if it matches the sales of 13,000 achieved worldwide over the past 17 years. On the other hand, it sold nearly 500 Darts last year and Stagecoach alone is buying 165 Pointer Darts in the current financial year. However, to maximise its potential, the Enviro200 Dart needs contemporary visual appeal and an improved and more durable driveline.

Some of the more significant changes to the Guildford-built chassis are around the Dana



front and rear axles. The ND556XLF front axle allows the bus to have a completely flat floor through to the rear of the wheelbase. The 9-24 rear axle has a heavier duty differential. Disc brakes (the same as on the larger Enviro300) are fitted all round and the air suspension has been updated to improve ride quality. The cab has the same adjustable steering column and instrument binnacle as both the Enviro300 and the double-deck Enviro400, which ought to make life easier for drivers in mixed fleets as well as reducing manufacturing costs.

The big mechanical change is the move to Euro4 engines. Alexander Dennis has followed the lead of 80% of the European truck and bus industry and is achieving the new emission limits by fitting selective catalytic reduction (SCR) engines — in its case the Cummins ISBe4. To over-simplify matters, SCR engines require less modification, but operators need to fill a separate tank with AdBlue exhaust treatment



additive. Both Alexander Dennis and Cummins sound highly convincing and sincere in their belief that this is the best solution to meeting Euro4 and Euro5 limits, as are Volvo, Mercedes-Benz and the other SCR people.

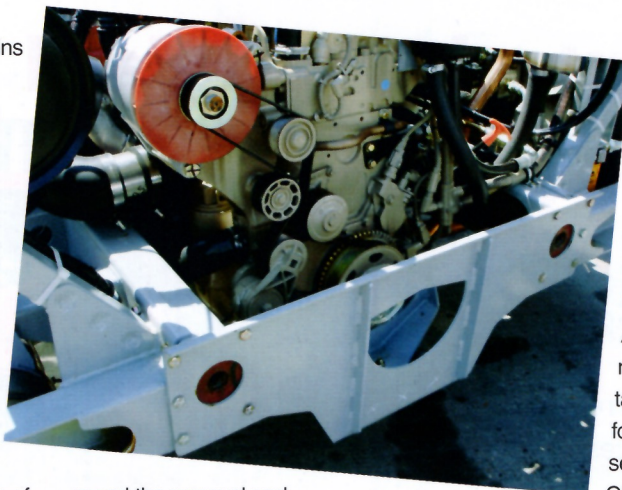
The trouble is that Scania and MAN — who are adopting the rival exhaust gas recirculation (EGR) approach, which doesn't require AdBlue — are just as sincere and convincing. The only manufacturer offering UK bus operators a choice is Optare, with SCR Cummins and Mercedes engines offered in parallel with EGR from MAN.

Following extensive in-service trials with six re-engined buses, Alexander Dennis talks of achieving a 10% improvement in fuel economy on Darts, 18% on double-deckers. Those figures fall to 5% and 13% when you allow for AdBlue and some of the improvement in double-deck performance comes from replacing the heavier and under-loved ISCe engine with the smaller ISBe4. However, even if the savings are smaller than the headlines suggest, this still is significant, for the achievement of every earlier Euro number's emission targets has come at the price of higher fuel consumption.

The new bus may offer only one form of combustion technology, but it does provide more customer choice in another direction. Other than the maximum length Super Dart, the Euro3 model has been available only with a four-cylinder ISBe — the one that sounds like a sewing machine that's just inhaled helium. On paper at least, four of the five length variants will come with the choice of either the four-cylinder ISBe4 (displacement up from 3.9litre at Euro3 to 4.5litre) or the six-cylinder equivalent (up from 5.9litre to 6.7litre).

All have the same front modules and substantially the same back end, except that the six-cylinder option adds 242mm to the rear overhang. The difference is in the wheelbase, the 29-seat Mini Pointer Dart successor having a 3,850mm wheelbase and an overall length of either 8.9m or 9.1m; no one has yet ordered the six-cylinder version at this length. Next size up is the 4,230mm wheelbase, which is either 9.3m or 9.5m long, followed by the 5,105mm (10.2m or 10.4m) and the 5,675mm (10.78m or 11m). The Super Dart successor is the 5,980mm wheelbase, 11.3m model, which is available only with a six-cylinder engine.

Other less major, but nonetheless significant changes around the engine are that the control panel has been moved from behind to on top of the engine for ease of access, and the vertical rear chassis members — the 'goalposts' to Alexander Dennis — have been splayed out to



**Left:** A clear view of the 10 bolts that come out to replace an engine on an Enviro200 Dart.

speed the removal and replacement of an engine. All that's needed now is to remove 10 bolts and an engine can be slid out in minutes.

Initially, it's being offered with a choice of automatic gearboxes, either the Allison 2100 four or five-speed with Telma retarder or Voith DV500 three-speed with integral retarder. Following trials, it will soon add the four or five-speed Allison T280R with integral retarder.

The styling of the Falkirk-built body follows contemporary thinking that, consciously or not, appears to have been influenced by the Mercedes-Benz Citaro and has also helped create the Optare Tempo and Plaxton Centro. It certainly gives the Enviro200 Dart a 21st century look to replace the early-1990s look of the Pointer and there is a definite family resemblance to the Enviro400 at the front and back. Alexander Dennis people argue that the deeper windscreen gives drivers a better sight line. The structure allows for cantilever seats and gasket glazing to be installed, and it seems only a matter of time before the Enviro300 is revamped with optional gasket glazing and the new front and rear in place of its Plaxton-designed ends.

#### Pre-launch orders 'top 100'

When it launched the new bus on 19 July, Alexander Dennis said it had taken orders for 70, with 50 more 'at an advanced stage'. It

named customers for 60 of the 70 firm orders — the first one (a 10.8m 37-seater) going to Jim Stones of Glazebury, Greater Manchester, a committed Pointer Dart customer. Twenty-five similar buses are going to Alliance & Leicester bank, for leasing or rental to operators. Travel London is taking 12; Stagecoach has ordered eight for Selkent, which it is in the process of selling to Macquarie Bank; Plymouth Citybus is taking three; and Epsom

Coaches 11.

In addition, Epsom-based Sunray Travel is taking two 8.9m 29-seaters for a new Surrey County Council contract (route 516: Epsom-Box Hill-Dorking) that it takes over from Surrey Connect on 4 September; they will likely be the first for a London area fleet.

The Epsom Coaches 11 will be the first with East Lancs bodies. It also anticipates selling the new chassis — Alexander Dennis badges bare chassis simply as Dennis products — with MCV bodies. While TransBus drove MCV into partnership with MAN by refusing to supply it with Dart chassis, Alexander Dennis has resumed supply. It says that these chassis reach MCV's Sutton, Cambridgeshire plant by a lengthy route, as they go straight from Guildford for shipment to the associated MCV plant in Egypt, which erects the framework for the Evolution body. The bodies are glazed, panelled and fitted out at Sutton.

Alexander Dennis appears keener to supply single-deck than double-deck chassis to third party UK bodybuilders. Besides the Epsom Coaches 11, East Lancs has bodied two Enviro300 chassis for Courtney Coaches of Bracknell. However, although East Lancs has bodied the last 11 Trident double-deck chassis (for Blackpool and the Isle of Man), all orders taken so far for the Enviro400 are for complete vehicles with Alexander Dennis bodywork.

**Right:** The family resemblance includes kidney-shaped rear windows, as on new lowheight Enviro400 19007 (MX06 XAG) in the Stagecoach Manchester fleet. Unlike the two-door Enviro400s built for London, these vehicles have conventional upper and lower deck emergency doors. **KEITH MCGILLIVRAY**





# London's interim standard type Volvo

**MATTHEW WHARMBY** looks at the Volvo Olympians that provided many of the UK capital's operators with new double-deckers to bridge the gap between the fleets bought by London Transport and the current generation of low-floor vehicles

**M**ore than any other type of double-decker, the Volvo Olympian epitomises the London bus of the mid-1990s.

Until 1987, successive incarnations of London Transport placed bulk orders for standard double-deckers, culminating in 260 ECW-bodied Leyland Olympians. Since 1998, the major operators have replaced practically all their double-deckers with new low-floor vehicles built to increasingly tight specifications drawn up by Transport for London. Between 1987 and 1994, route tendering and the swing towards mini and midibuses limited London Buses subsidiaries' purchase of new double-deckers, but that started changing after those companies were privatised and began replacing their inherited fleets of 10 to 15-year-old Leyland Titans and MCW Metrobuses.

Volvo re-engineered and relaunched the former Leyland Olympian as its own product in



**Above:** Stagecoach Selkent VA74 (R174 VPU) in Thomas Street, Woolwich in August 2002. Now numbered 16074, this Alexander RL-type has become a one-door bus in the Stagecoach Western fleet in Ayrshire. **MARK LYONS**

early 1993, with a choice of Cummins L10 or its own TD102 engine. It sold more chassis over the ensuing six years of production than the original model had achieved in 13 years when not only had London cut back, but the end of new bus grant, followed by deregulation and privatisation greatly reduced demand for large buses. While they also bought new double-deckers from Scania, DAF and Dennis, the Volvo Olympian — market leader nationwide — was by far the most popular choice in London, with 746 bought new for operation on tendered or commercial routes. Most had either Northern Counties Palatine or Alexander R-type bodies, but three fleets specified two different styles of East Lancs coachwork and there also were significant differences between the two main types.

## First ended up with First

The first two for a London fleet went to Capital Citybus in 1993; it was then owned by CNT of Hong Kong, which also owned Citybus in the still British colony. Buses 167/8 had the new Northern Counties Palatine II body, which was then offered exclusively on the new Volvo.

**Top left:** Wearing its special livery for the 607 Express, First CentreWest Palatine II V42 (P242 UCW) passes through West Ealing in June 2002. It has become bus 34042 and has been cascaded to Bristol. **GEOFF RIXON**

**Left:** London General Palatine-bodied VN154 (R554 LGH) crossing Putney Bridge on its southbound journey towards North Cheam in 2000. **GEOFF RIXON**

However, they weren't actually this fleet's first Palatine IIs as bus 166, delivered earlier the same year, is a unique example on a Leyland Olympian chassis.

Capital Citybus, which was sold to its management in 1995, later bought Dennis Arrows with Palatine II bodies, but specified other body designs on its subsequent 43 Volvo Olympians. Twenty-eight had the original Palatine style, buses 239-49 arriving in 1996 for route 67 (Wood Green-Aldgate) and 206-22 for the 341 (County Hall-Northumberland Park) in autumn 1998. Between these batches were 224-38 with Alexander RH-type bodies built in Belfast in 1997 for route 91 (Trafalgar Square-Crouch End). The RH-types were the first in predominantly London red rather than the operator's own yellow livery, though most earlier buses were repainted red before they left London. Although ordered when the company was an independent business, the Palatines for the 341 arrived a few months after FirstGroup took over and rebranded the business as First Capital.

Under First ownership, the Olympians were given VA and VN fleetnumber prefixes and later, when national fleetnumbering was introduced, surviving examples became the VDA and VDN types. Most, however, served just one contract term before being replaced by low-floor buses and have been cascaded to Yorkshire and First Potteries. Some spent their final London days on other First contracts, but four VDNs remain with First London's rail replacement unit.

First amassed a further 47 Volvo Olympians in London through its acquisition of CentreWest in March 1997. As a Peter Hendy-led management/employee-owned company, CentreWest had expanded beyond its west London territory to win contracts in the





Orpington area and bought Palatine II-bodied V1-12 for route 61 (Bromley North-Chislehurst) in December 1995. Similar, but semi-coach-seated V41-55 followed in 1996 for the 607 (Shepherd's Bush-Uxbridge Express).

Under First ownership, 20 of the last Volvo Olympians to be built appeared at CentreWest's Alpertons garage early in 1999 for route 83 (Ealing-Golders Green). These were manufacturer's stock vehicles with original-style Palatine bodies and, consequently, didn't have First corporate interiors. VN888-907 (soon renumbered VN88-107) replaced Leyland Olympians, and in turn were replaced by Volvo B7TLs in the winter of 2002/03. Seven of these buses replaced the last MCW Metrobuses at First London, gained VDN codes to their five-figure fleetnumbers and departed London in 2004. Orpington lost its Olympians in 2002, but three passed to Uxbridge for the 607, all to be withdrawn in 2004.

### The biggest fleets

Two of the big groups — Go-Ahead and Stagecoach — are responsible for nearly two thirds of London's Volvo Olympians. By chance, both amassed fleets of 230 in the capital at a time when other operators had yet to commit themselves to such large-scale renewal of their double-deck fleets.

Go-Ahead sourced 183 direct and acquired a further 47 when it bought the Metrobus business in September 1999. The first of its own, for London Central route P11 (County Hall-Peckham), were nine stock built single-door Alexander Royales, numbered AV1-9, which arrived in 1995. Most of its other purchases were of Northern Counties Palatines. Bus-seated single-door NV1-27 came in 1996, the first 10 for Docklands Express route D1 (Waterloo-Harbour Exchange), the other 17 for route 51 (Woolwich-Orpington).

Dual-door deliveries in 1997/98 saw otherwise similar NV28-48 take over the 171 (Holborn-Catford), NV49-79 the 35 (Shoreditch-Clapham Junction) and 40 (Aldgate-Dulwich) and NV81-99 the 21 (Moorgate-Foots Cray). There was no NV80, just as later numbers NV100/40/60 were omitted as round numbered registrations became more difficult to obtain on a routine basis.

Further NVs continued the series concurrently after Go-Ahead purchased London General in February 1997, with NV101-39/41-59 taking over the 93 (North Cheam-Putney Bridge), 151 (Wallington-Cheam), 154 (Morden-West Croydon) and 213 (Sutton-Kingston) at Sutton. Apparently, London General's first choice for route 74 (Baker Street-Roehampton) was the Scania N113, but it remained with Volvo instead, taking NV161-87 in early 1998. These were its only Palatine IIs; they wore an altered livery and had high-backed seats.



**Above:** London United VA46 (R946 YOV) last October, towards the end of operation of route 406 by these Alexander RH-bodied Olympians. **MATTHEW WHARMBY**

**Right:** Kentish Bus Palatine II-bodied 5557 (L557 YCU) at Plumstead in March 1997, in the livery in which these buses were delivered. **GEOFF RIXON**

Conversion of these routes to low-floor operation began in 2001, and 45 of the earlier NVs were converted to single-door and cascaded within the group to Go North East in 2002.

Three more — among many NVs sold to the Ensignbus dealership along with the AVs — returned to Go-Ahead ownership last year when it acquired Solent Blue Line. Thirty-four were kept as permanent driver trainers, while most of the Palatine IIs remain for commercial work, four as convertible open-toppers in traditional London General red, white and silver.

Metrobus bought all its Volvo Olympians before Go-Ahead took over. It took Palatine-bodied 817-9/21-4/6-9 for the 261 (Lewisham-Green Street Green) in November 1996, followed the next September by East Lancs Pyoneer-bodied 830-9/41-5 for the 64 (West Croydon-New Addington) and, in 1998, by Pyoneers 846-58 for the 119 (Bromley North-Croydon Airport) and Palatines 859-66 for the 320 (Bromley North-Biggin Hill). When Metrobus expanded its Sussex operations, disposals usually proceeded there, but the London Central tie-up enabled NVs to flow in both directions; Metrobus received several for repaint into blue and yellow, returning them once finished for forays into central London on routes 35 and 40, still in that livery. Starting with the conversion of the 261 to Tridents in 2001, the Olympians were replaced by low-floor buses, the process being completed by 2004.



### Stagecoach buys lowheights

Stagecoach put all 230 of its Volvo Olympians into London between 1995 and 1998 and had cascaded all but five of them out by March 2004. Sixty-five had Alexander RL-type bodies (VA class), the others Northern Counties Palatines (VN).

Having seriously considered selling the underperforming Selkent business, Stagecoach then kick-started its London fleet renewal programme by putting 52 new full-height Palatines on to routes 53 (Oxford Circus-Plumstead) and X53 (Oxford Circus-Thamesmead). At the time, Selkent was managed separately with its own managing director — ex-Cumberland man Paul Southgate — and it numbered these buses 301-52 without class prefixes. They subsequently gained V and then VN prefixes when the company came under East London control.

Most subsequent deliveries, from 1996 onwards, were long wheelbase buses to Stagecoach's standard national low height, and after the first 26 all had two doors rather than one as specified outside London. To begin with, London Buses wasn't too happy about lowheight buses and the London Regional Passengers' Committee was never happy about them, but Stagecoach persuaded the tendering authority that it could bid more keenly by being





**Above:** East Lancs-bodied London & Country 702 (M702 HPF) on the 406 at Surbiton in June 1996. This bus has since gone to the Arriva Yorkshire fleet. **GEOFF RIXON**

able to cascade these buses more readily to other parts of the country.

Single-door VN1-26 went on to East London routes 262 (Stratford-Beckton), 374 (Romford-Harold Hill) and 473 (Stratford-North Woolwich), followed by two-door VN27-43 for the 26 (Waterloo-Hackney Wick) and Bow-based VA44-81 for the 26, the 25 (Oxford Circus-Ilford), 277 (Highbury & Islington-Canary Wharf) and D7 (Mile End-Poplar). The only shorter wheelbase/full-height vehicles — VN82-110 — took over Selkent's 54 (West Croydon-Plumstead) and 75 (West Croydon-Lewisham) in the autumn of 1997, with the standard specification resumed for VN111-21 (completing the 86). VA122-34, ordered for Selkent's 194 (West Croydon-Forest Hill), were Bromley Garage's first new buses in nearly 14 years, while East London got VA135-48 and VN149-78 at Leyton during 1998, for the 48 (London Bridge-Walthamstow), 55 (Oxford Circus-Leyton) and 56 (Whipps Cross-St Bartholomew's Hospital).

As new Dennis Tridents flooded in from 1999, the Olympians began to be moved out of their original garages, initially cascading to other routes and sometimes between the two companies to replace Leyland Olympians and various single-deckers. First to be transferred out of London were the single-door VNs, followed by VN301-52 and then the 'long and low' VNs and VAs. Five have been retained for commercial work, the former VN1-3 (now 16001-3) at Waterden Road and VA122/3 (now 16122/3) at Bromley.

#### London United and smaller fleets

Following privatisation, London United bought 62 Alexander-bodied Volvo Olympians. The first 19 (A112-30) were not for tendered services, but the Airbus routes between Heathrow Airport and central London. They had coach-seated Royale

bodies with full air-conditioning and a wheelchair lift. However, London United — by then part of the French-owned Transdev group — sold the Airbus operation to National Express in February 2000. The service ended on the last day of 2004. Most of the Royales were sold to FirstGroup, with others sold to South Gloucestershire and Western Greyhound, but three remain in NatEx ownership in the Travel West Midlands private hire fleet.

The other 43 were supplied with RH-type bus bodies. Single-door VA1-10 arrived in 1996 for route 131 (Kingston-Wimbledon), followed by two-door Belfast-built buses in 1997/98. VA11-31 — with Westlink fleetnames and copious branding — were for the 57 (Kingston-Streatham Hill), VA32-53 for the 281 (Hounslow-Tolworth). All three routes were converted to Dennis Trident operation in 2001-03, cascading some Olympians to replace Metrobuses on routes 406/411 (Kingston-Epsom/West Molesey). A handful migrated to north-west London after Transdev bought London Sovereign in November 2002, gaining its red and black livery and operating on most Edgware-based routes until Volvo B7TLs and Scania OmniDekkas saw them off. They have been sold to FirstGroup for operation outside London.

The final London United VAs, latterly in a duller livery of red with a grey skirt, were stood down from local bus work last November when the 411 was converted to 10.7m Darts and the 406 to Tridents. However, five single-door and 10 two-door examples remain for other commercial work.

Smaller fleets on London work included seven Palatine IIs (417-420, 780-782) that Armchair operated from 1998 to 2002 after winning a renewed contract for route 65 (Kingston-Ealing), eight similar buses (557-9/61-5) for Kentish Bus in 1994 for the 161

(subsequently lost to Metrobus) and 25 long wheelbase East Lancs Pyoneers (338-72, of which 351-9 were single-door) supplied to Harris Bus in 1997/98 for routes 128/129 (Romford/Dagenham-Claybury), 150 (Becontree Heath-Chigwell Row) and 180 (Lewisham-Belvedere). The Kentish Bus vehicles have been cascaded within the Arriva Southern Counties fleet, while the Harris Bus fleet was reincarnated as East Thames Buses, the last of the Olympians (class ELV) going in April 2004.

Sovereign operated eight original-style Palatines (53/4/6-9, 63/4) in its blue and cream livery on route 292 (Borehamwood-Colindale) after regaining the contract from December 1998, but cascaded them elsewhere in the Blazefield group when it replaced them with low-floor Volvo B7TLs in 2003.

London & Country put 20 East Lancs E-type-bodied Volvo Olympians (685-704) on to route 403 (West Croydon-Warlingham) from late 1994, some also operating new route 400 (Wallington-Caterham-on-the-Hill). A handful received Londonlinks' dual-green livery, but 11 of the batch continued on the 403 into Arriva London South ownership, repainted red and, despite being Volvos, were given L prefixes. Low-floor DAFs replaced the last of them at the end of 2004.

#### The Metroline survivors

The last vestige of Volvo Olympian operation on a traditional London bus route is by Metroline on the 84 (New Barnet-St Albans) from Potters Bar. They are among the newer examples of 38 Alexander RH-type Olympians that Metroline bought in 1996 and 1998. AV1-22 replaced the Metrobuses and Titans on former Atlas Bus route 52 (Victoria-Willesden), while AV23-38 replaced Metrobuses on the 16 (Victoria-Cricklewood). They were joined in 2000 by AV39, an Alexander Royale of 10.6m length new to Singapore Bus Services and intended to be the vanguard of a large intake following ComfortDelGro's purchase of Metroline. No more followed.

Metroline's purchase of MTL London in 1998 added 16 Palatine II-bodied Volvo Olympians (V201-10/2-7), which MTL had acquired with the London Suburban Buses business in 1995 and which had been new in 1993/94 for routes 4 (Waterloo-Archway), 41 (Archway-Tottenham Hale) and 271 (Moorgate-Highgate). Like Metroline's AVs, they were moved around between routes and saw their last notable use on Underground replacement route 205 in the aftermath of the 7 July bombings last year. AVs at Holloway had the distinction of being the last step-entrance buses in mainstream TfL service, coming out of service on route 4 on 23 December last. Ensignbus has since sold several of these P-registered vehicles to operators around the country.



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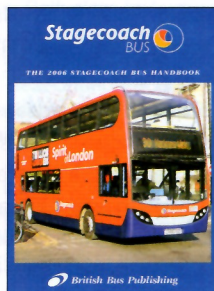
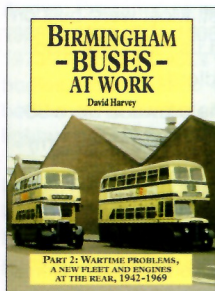
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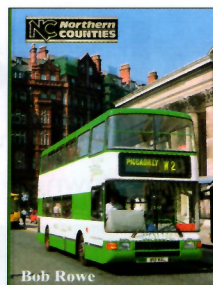
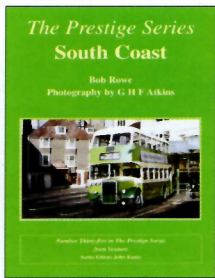
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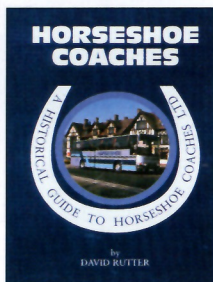
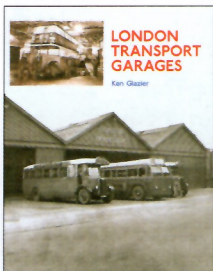
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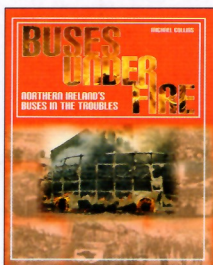
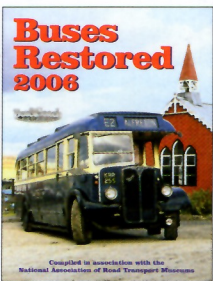
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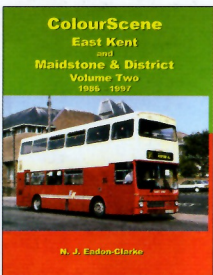
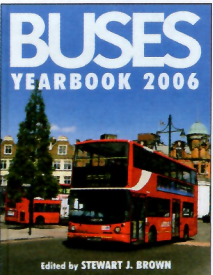
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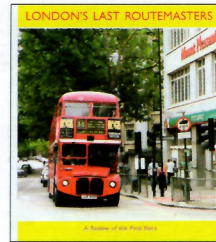
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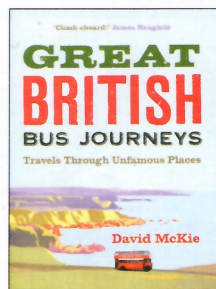
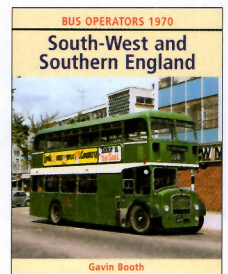
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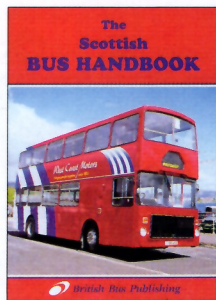
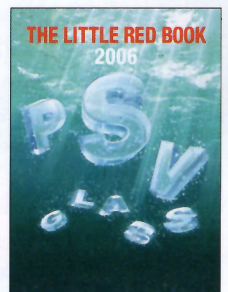
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# Last Leopard marks X-type exit

Two long eras straddling five decades have ended in Northern Ireland with the retirement of Ulsterbus's Leyland Leopards and a locally built body known — almost secretly — as the Alexander X-type



**T**he withdrawal of the last Ulsterbus Leyland Leopard on 30 June not only brought an end to 42 years of service by this chassis type in Northern Ireland, but also marked the end of one of the last body designs produced exclusively for service in the province — the Belfast-built Alexander X-type.

Although this type designation fitted neatly between Alexander's better known and more widely sold Y-type and the low-frame W-type built on some rear-engined chassis, it was more of an internal code than a marketing name. Nonetheless, Ulsterbus and Citybus bought well in excess of 1,600 of them from Alexander and its predecessor in Northern Ireland, Potter's of Belfast. Most were built on Leopards and Bristol RELs, but there also were Bristol LHs and Bedfords.

The first Leopards in the province were 38-seat Wolfhound Express-branded 36ft (11m) coaches supplied to the Ulster Transport Authority in July 1965 and bodied in the UTA's Duncrue Street workshops using Metal Sections frames. They looked similar to Coras Iompair Éireann's contemporary C-class Leopards, were equipped with toilets and built for express services, their specification and brand name influenced by Greyhound coaches in the United States. Two shorter examples followed in 1966 when, with Ulsterbus on the horizon, fifteen 30ft Alexander-bodied Leopards were acquired from Western SMT to replace halfcab Leyland Tigers.

Within days of Ulsterbus beginning operations in April 1967, five new Plaxton-bodied Leopards joined the coach fleet and were followed by seven Potter-bodied express coaches to the Y-type design. The first of what



**Top left:** The last new Leopard to enter service with Ulsterbus, PSU3F/4R 339 (BXI 339), was delivered in 1983 and took to the road in March 1984. Translink has presented it to the Irish Transport Trust. The Belfast-built X-type body combined the windscreen of the Scottish-built Y-type with pillar spacing and side mouldings influenced by mid-1960s Willowbrook bus bodies. **Pictures by PAUL SAVAGE**

**Middle:** Ulsterbus specified short 45-seat X-type bus bodies on 142 mid-engined Bedfords. This 1985 view in Bangor bus station shows by then 11-year-old Bedford YRQ 1726 (HOI 1726) waiting to depart for Newtownards. It was part of a batch of 98, which was followed by 44 YLQs in 1976/77. Ulsterbus also had 25 Bedford YRTs with 11m 53-seat bodies.

**Left:** Ulsterbus operated Bristol RELs for nearly 35 years. Seen at Wyebridge in June 1988 is 2441 (WOI 2441) of 1980, an REL6G with 52-seat X-type body.





**Above:** Preparing to leave Ballyclare in August 1988 is 1608 (FOI 1608), one of a hundred 1973/74 Bristol LH6Ls with 45-seat X-type bodies. Potter's fitted 41-seat dual purpose bodies on 10 similar chassis in 1968 when the lightweight LH first became available.

**Middle right:** One of the last Leopards bodied by Potter before the Alexander takeover was PSU3A/4R 1327 (4027 WZ) of 1969, photographed outside Killeel depot in 1982.

**Below right:** It's hard to realise that Ulsterbus Leopard PSU3E/4R 258 (XOI 2258) of 1982 is a direct antecedent of the Wright StreetCar. Numerically the first Wright-bodied bus supplied to Ulsterbus, it carried a TT-type body fitted originally with 53 coach seats, but had bus seats when photographed in Dromore in 1985. Leopard 259 had the Royal coach version of the body, with bonded glazing and gentler front mouldings.



would become the X-type body were supplied on Leopards and LHs the following year, the bodybuilder — which had started out as MH Coachworks — coming under Alexander's control during 1969 and adopting its Scottish parent's name. Leopards with this style of body entered service every year until March 1984, when bus 339 (BXI 339) took to the road.

Out of 681 Leopards bought new by Ulsterbus and the UTA, two were recycled out of parts salvaged from vehicles destroyed in the Troubles and 44 had Plaxton or Duple coach bodies. Perhaps the most notable two, 258/9, arrived in 1982. Part of a batch of 10 originally all to have had Plaxton bodies, they were diverted to Wright's of Ballymena to provide it with the opportunity of building some of its first large bus bodies. Besides the ex-Western SMT coaches, 110 — mostly from Ribble and Southdown — were bought secondhand or came with acquired businesses. And 13 examples new to



Ulsterbus returned there in 1987 with the acquisition of Lurgan-based Sureline Coaches.

Although 232 Leopards were destroyed in the Troubles, the average lifespan of the others

was 14 to 16 years. Owing to government spending cuts, some of the later examples were kept much longer, with some of the last operating examples having clocked up as many as 28 years of service.



# When buses came under fire



**MICHAEL COLLINS** tells the story of how Northern Ireland's bus industry survived The Troubles

*I always remember an incident with a policeman. I said to him: 'You get danger money, and you get there whenever a riot has already started, whenever you are called into action.' I said: 'Whenever you first go to that riot, what's the first thing you see?' He said: 'There's a bus burning.' I said: 'The bus drivers get it first. The police and the army come next. It's always the bus drivers are on the front line.'* **Dennis O'Neill, driver with Citybus.**

**D**uring the various episodes of civil unrest in Ireland, public transport has always been in the front line. Trams were destroyed in Dublin during the Easter Rising in 1916 and the railways were hit hard during the civil war that followed. After the formation of the state of Northern Ireland in 1921, public transport was caught up in the periods of sectarian violence that followed. These episodes were euphemistically named The Troubles.

In the 1920s Troubles, there were times when passengers and crews of Belfast trams passing streets connecting interface areas had to lie flat on the floor for fear of snipers. Two trams carrying shipyard workers were bombed in Belfast in retaliation for sectarian attacks on Catholics at Harland & Wolff's. Between 1957 and 1962, the IRA launched a campaign against the Northern state where, among other things, it targeted public transport facilities. Although the railway network, much more extensive than today's, took the lion's share of the hits, the Ulster Transport Authority's bus fleet also

**Above:** Two Harkness-bodied Daimler CVG6s of Belfast Corporation under attack on the Springfield Road in 1972. CVG6s like this accounted for 15 of the 36 corporation buses destroyed that year. **Picture courtesy RAYMOND BELL**



**Above:** Typical of the British buses acquired and rushed into service was Citybus 651 (VLW 292G), former London Country MBS292, which reached Northern Ireland in 1980. This MCW-bodied AEC Merlin is seen loading outside the now closed York Road railway station in Belfast. **WILL HUGHES**

suffered losses, mainly of buses bombed or burnt while parked in outlying country depots.

However, the damage caused during those years pales into insignificance compared to what was suffered by Northern Ireland's bus companies during the most recent Troubles. These flared up in earnest in 1969 and are still not completely over. The first bus destroyed, though, was in 1964 when the initial sparks of the current Troubles were ignited. This was the only trolleybus to be lost, Guy BTX number 174, burnt out in rioting in Belfast; the city's trolleybus system closed in 1968.

The bus companies chiefly affected by the Troubles were Citybus and its predecessor the Belfast Corporation Transport Department, and Ulsterbus. Citybus, now branded Metro, operates services within the city of Belfast, while

Ulsterbus operates most services elsewhere in the province. However, other smaller companies suffered too. The Londonderry & Lough Swilly Railway Co, which has only operated buses since 1953 and whose main operating area is north Donegal in the Irish Republic, lost several vehicles near its base in Londonderry/Derry. Sureline, operating local services around Craigavon, Co. Armagh, suffered similar losses. Schoolbus fleets were also targeted from time to time and CIÉ lost some vehicles operating into Northern Ireland.

## Nine miles of destruction

However, to return to the two largest companies, Ulsterbus and Citybus. Between 1964 and the signing of the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement in 1998, which marks the end of the worst period



of the Troubles, Ulsterbus and BCT/Citybus lost 1,484 vehicles. When this total is set against the current joint fleet size of the two companies of around 1,492 vehicles, one can appreciate better the scale of the destruction. Add to this the numbers of vehicles damaged, then the statistics become even more remarkable. Another way of looking at it is, if all the buses totally destroyed were lined up nose to tail, they would stretch for about nine miles.

The greatest losses were of Bristol REs with 390 destroyed, almost half the number owned, followed by 232 Leyland Leopards and 209 Daimler Fleetline double-deckers. There were three-figure losses in 1972 with 135 buses destroyed across the two companies, followed by 1976 with 100, 1977 with 102, and 1978 with 107.

We must not forget the human cost. Twelve busmen from Ulsterbus and BCT/Citybus were killed in the course of their work. The first victim was a BCT driver killed to prevent him giving evidence against people who had hijacked his bus. Four Ulsterbus employees were killed in a bomb attack on Oxford Street bus station in Belfast. An Ulsterbus driver was killed in crossfire between paramilitaries and the army. A Citybus inspector was killed because he was a member of a paramilitary group and five other men were singled out and killed by paramilitaries while driving their buses. In addition, two other Ulsterbus employees were murdered by paramilitaries, though not in the course of their duties. Also, three CIÉ busmen were killed in Dublin while at work, by bombs planted in Dublin city centre by loyalist paramilitaries.

In Northern Ireland, some passengers also lost their lives, sometimes by accident when they were caught up in attacks on buses while others were deliberately targeted by paramilitaries because of their perceived religion. In addition to the deaths, considerable numbers of bus workers and passengers were injured, sometimes seriously, as a result of attacks on buses.

There are also stories of remarkable stubbornness and determination by the management and workers of the bus companies to keep the wheels turning. Ulsterbus and Citybus, which share a top management team, were led during most of this period by their charismatic German managing director, Werner Heubeck. He took over the running of Ulsterbus at its formation in 1967 on the demise of the UTA. He was not a transport man but a professional manager who intended to stay just a few years, get Ulsterbus up and running and then move on. However, the

challenges of managing the buses through the Troubles caught his imagination and he stayed in the province.

He turned what had been the unprofitable UTA bus operation into the black within 12 months, where it has remained, Troubles notwithstanding, ever since. On the reorganisation of local government in 1973, the assets of the loss-making Belfast Corporation Transport Department were foisted on him; at the height of the Troubles, he also turned that operation around into profit.

#### Heubeck led from the front

Werner Heubeck led from the front, being prepared to move buses out of danger and personally carried suspect bombs off buses. His management team and bus crews took their lead from him and operated vehicles in circumstances that would be unthinkable anywhere else in the UK. He received great support from the trades unions and in particular from a senior officer in the Transport & General Workers Union, Eugene O'Callaghan, himself an ex-bus driver. Although prepared to fight tooth and nail with Werner Heubeck over his members' pay and conditions, the two men stood shoulder to shoulder in their efforts to

keep the buses running as normally as possible during the worst years. Mr Heubeck, who became a household name in Northern Ireland, was made an OBE 1977 for his work as managing director of Ulsterbus and Citybus.

An aspect of the Troubles that caught the interest of bus enthusiasts was the import of secondhand buses from Great Britain to replace vehicles destroyed during civil unrest. Batches of Bristol REs as well as ex-London Merlins and Swifts were shipped over to Northern Ireland and were often immediately pressed into service, frequently in their original owners' colours, so desperate was the situation on the streets of the province.

The last bus to be hijacked and destroyed was Ulsterbus Leyland Tiger 1350, taken while on a church run in Bangor, Co. Down on 11 September 2005. Let's hope it'll be the last, that attacks on drivers will cease and that the companies will be left in peace to operate the efficient service they did through those difficult years.

■ Michael Collins's new book, *Buses under Fire*, is reviewed on p64 this month. We are also offering six copies as prizes in an easy-to-enter competition on p33.

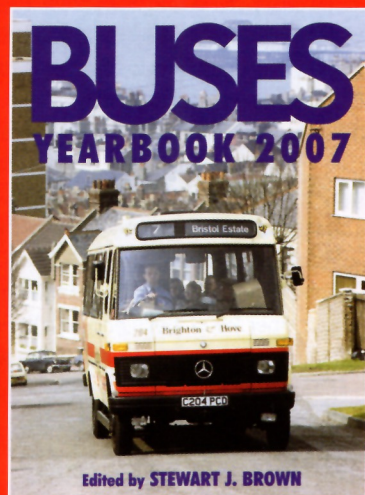
**Below:** Foyle Street, Derry in 1983 with Ulsterbus 1131 (DRN 667D), a Marshall-bodied Leyland Leopard PSU4/2R still in former owner Ribble's red, stands between two Alexander (Belfast)-bodied Bristol RELL6Gs. Out of 12 acquired in 1981/82, it was the only one to survive intact until withdrawn in 1985; three were never operated, one was withdrawn in 1982 and the other seven met malicious ends between 1981 and 1983. **PAUL SAVAGE**



**Right:** The remains of secondhand ECW-bodied Bristol RELLs 715 (WNO 941L) — ex-Eastern National — and ex-United 781 blocking Springhill Avenue, West Belfast on 11 March 1988. **MARK O'NEILL**



# Great Summer Reading For Bus Enthusiasts From



## Buses Yearbook 2007

August, as always, sees the publication of the new edition of Buses Yearbook, an event eagerly anticipated by many bus enthusiasts. This year's edition contains the usual varied mix of articles and photo features which so many enjoy, dealing with both historical and contemporary subjects. Topics covered in the new 2007 edition include digital bus photography, Highland Omnibuses from the 1950s onwards, driving on trans-Pennine routes in the 1970s, researching rare bus photos and takeovers in the bus industry in 2005.

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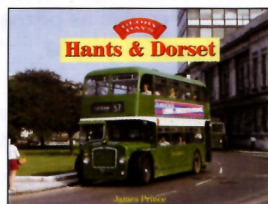


## London Buses Around Kent

For some 50 years, London Transport's red and green buses were a familiar sight across much of Kent. This book is a colourful tribute to the many and varied LT operations in Kent, from the late 1950s through to the early 1970s. In some 85 colour illustrations, the majority previously unpublished, this book explores LT services in both the urban and rural parts of Kent to provide the reader with a fascinating survey of bus and coach services in this part of the Garden of England.

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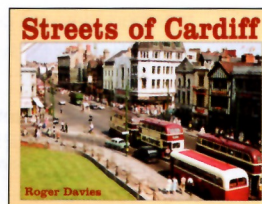
£14.99



## Glory Days: Hants & Dorset

The latest title in the popular 'Glory Days' series, recounts the history, from its origins through to the mid-1970s, of one of the best-known operators on the south coast. Hants & Dorset dominated bus services in rural Hampshire and Dorset with routes linking the major urban centres such as Bournemouth, Southampton, Salisbury and Swanage and also served a range of holiday destinations which made the company well known to transport enthusiasts outside the area.

ISBN: 0 7110 3105 3 | HB | 184mm x 240mm  
96pp | c125 colour & b/w photographs | £16.99

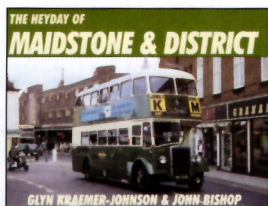


## Streets of Cardiff

A pictorial tribute to the variety of public transport visible on the streets of Cardiff from the mid-1950s through to the mid-1970s, the era when colour photography was becoming popular. The photos and their informative captions not only provide details about the bus or trolleybus featured, they also explore the city's streetscape and note how this has changed over the years. These books have caused many to reflect on how the once unique appearance of individual British

towns and cities has been replaced by the increasing uniformity of today's urban landscape.

ISBN: 0 7110 3098 7 | HB | 80pp | 184 x 240mm  
95 colour and 1 b/w photographs | £14.99



## The Heyday of Maidstone & District

One of the best-known names in the British bus industry, this book records the evolution of the company and its fleet from the late 1950s, when it was still a subsidiary of BET, through to the mid-1970s, when the NBC's corporate identity started make an impact. The book will delight those who knew and used the services of M&D during the period covered and will bring back many nostalgic memories for bus enthusiasts.

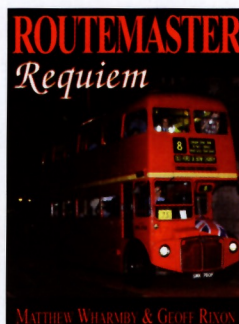
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## Bygone London

This new compilation, illustrated almost exclusively with unpublished archive colour photographs, accompanied by detailed captions, examines how London changed in the years between the end of World War 2 and the 1960s. With a strong emphasis on transport, alongside the photos of the trams, buses and trolleybuses, are rare colour images portraying the Festival of Britain in 1951 and other facets of Metropolitan life during these years.

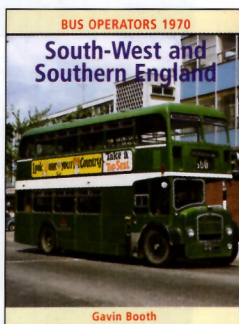
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## Routemaster Requiem

This is a highly illustrated tribute to the last years in service of a vehicle which was as much as British institution as a means of urban transport. The chronological sections examine, through text and photographs, the build up to the conversion of each route and how the actual conversion was marked on the day, providing a unique record of the gradual elimination of the Routemaster from London.

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## New publications this Summer are . . . . .

- **London Buses in 2005** - A review of the routes, vehicles, operators, significant events as well as the politics of the year that make up the story that was 2005. Topics included are the end of main-stream Routemaster operation, the Heritage routes, the terrorist atrocities, special operations and noteworthy liveries; 60 pages gloriously illustrated in colour - £7.00 (£6.00 to members).



- **London Bus and Tram Fleetbook 2006** - up-to-date to March 2006, includes all the leading operators vehicles in London and the home counties in one handy A6 pocket sized publication. Order now, while stocks last, - £7.00 (£6.50 to members).



- **London Bus Magazine** (no. 136) includes a major article entitled *Bus and Coach Services in Sunbury-on-Thames (The first fifty years)*, *On the Tourist Trail in London* - a review from the 1970's of tourist services in London, *More on Destination Blinds*, as well as the usual *Around & About* quarterly review and book reviews. £5.00 (£4.00 to members).

- **London's Major Bus Operators Fleet Allocations to May 2006** - £3.50 (£2.50 to members).

- **London's Buses & Trams Route Working Index to 5<sup>th</sup> May 2006** - £3.50 (£2.50 to members).

- And this year the **Autumn Transport Spectacular** will again be at Harrow Leisure Centre and the date is Saturday the 4<sup>th</sup> November.

## EXCLUSIVE READERS BOOK COMPETITION

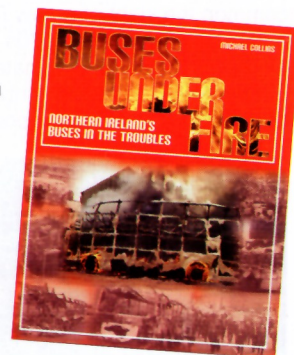
### WIN ONE OF SIX *BUSES UNDER FIRE*

The bus industry of Northern Ireland experienced difficulties unknown in the rest of the United Kingdom when 30 years of civil strife caused hundreds of buses to be destroyed, others and their crews and passengers to be attacked and on some occasions killed.

Despite these often terrifying difficulties, Ulsterbus and Citybus provided as comprehensive a bus service as they could, and indeed succeeded in doing so at a profit. At the height of the Troubles, they helped achieve this with a steady stream of carefully selected secondhand buses acquired from mainland UK fleets.

In his new book, *Buses under Fire* (see pages 30 and 64), historian and bus enthusiast Michael Collins tells the courageous human story of

how this was done and sets it into a historical context to make this one of the most remarkable bus books produced in recent years. It sells for a recommended retail price of £14.99, but Colourpoint Books has generously provided **SIX** as prizes to readers in this month's easy-to-enter competition. All you need to do is send in the correct answers to the three questions below to arrive no later than **Friday 29 September**. The correct answers will be entered in a prize draw and we will announce the winners in November *Buses*.



Please mark your answers with a tick or cross and attach this coupon (or a photocopy) **TO A POSTCARD** and send to **BUSES Ulster Book Competition, Marketing Department, Ian Allan Publishing, Riverdene Business Park, Molesey Road, Hersham, Surrey, KT12 4RG**

**RULES** - The Editor's decision is final and no correspondence can be entered into. The prizes are as described and there is no cash alternative. The competition is not open to employees of Ian Allan Publishing or *Buses* magazine. **Strictly only ONE entry permitted per household.**

### QUESTIONS

- 1) How many buses did the major operators lose in the Troubles?  
☐ 1,492    ☐ 1,484    ☐ 1,448
- 2) Which type of bus accounted for the greatest number of losses?  
☐ Bristol RE    ☐ Daimler Fleetline    ☐ Leyland Leopard
- 3) What was the name of Ulsterbus's German-born managing director?  
☐ Werner von Braun    ☐ Werner Heubeck  
☐ Franz Beckenbauer

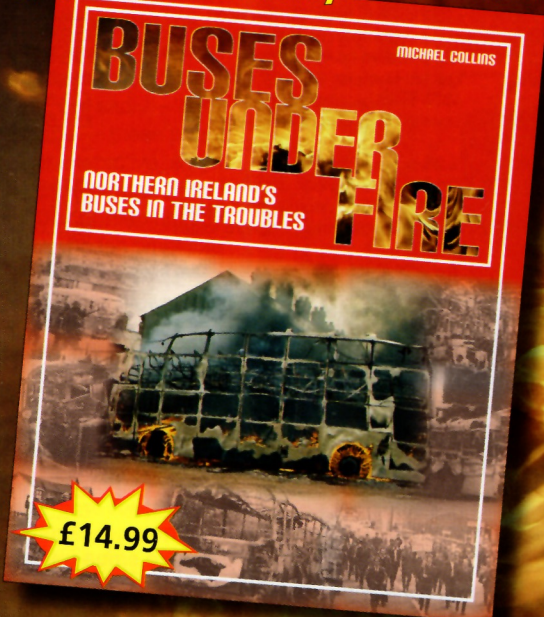
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## Buses Under Fire

Running buses in adversity - the men of Ulsterbus and Citybus tell their story.



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Once commonplace, Ford R-series are hard to find these days. **MIKE FENTON** tracked down this particularly rare example new to one of the big banks

Younger readers may not appreciate how common the sight of a new Ford coach was during the 1960s and 1970s but this make, along with Bedford, dominated what was often referred to as the lightweight sector. Motorways and modestly-powered coaches,

such as those that Ford built, weren't really made for each other and, as the motorway network increased, so sales steadily declined until in the 1980s the maker pulled out of large passenger chassis manufacturing in Britain.

These days, finding an operational Ford coach is not easy, so I have delved into the past and found both an interesting and unique specimen. The vehicle in question, registration A911 LUD, appeared towards the end of 1983 and had a shortened R1115

chassis with 31-seat Riviera bodywork by Reeve Burgess of Pilsley, Derbyshire. Its owner was unusual, being the National Westminster Bank. It was based at the bank's impressive training centre at Heythrop Park, Oxfordshire and its main duty was transporting staff to and from the nearby Oxford-Worcester railway line.

Knowing all this and obtaining a photograph are two quite different things and, perhaps understandably, my formal request to be allowed to photograph it was politely refused. As luck would have it, though, my patience was rewarded as local independent Worth's of Enstone later purchased the coach and I finally got the shot I wanted in September 1993.



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# Yellow Buses treats its site to a makeover

**RICHARD DELAHOY** tests out the latest web offering from Bournemouth's now French-owned local bus company

In the first article in this series (*Buses* January 1999), I commented then on how few bus companies had their own websites. How different that is today and now the most newsworthy comment is often to see how active the web equivalents of Trinny and Susanna are. Confused? Well, lots of operator sites are now having makeovers, to refresh a tired layout or to reflect changes in the ownership or direction of the business.

Transdev Yellow Buses falls clearly into the second category. The new network introduced on 2 July (*Buses* July, p7) was accompanied by a fresh look at [www.yellowbuses.co.uk](http://www.yellowbuses.co.uk). Compared to Southern Vectis's new offering (*On the Net*, July), the home page appears to be rather cluttered. On the left, a menu gives access to the usual headings — times, maps, news, fares and so on. The 'times' page allows you to download full colour PDF leaflets (up to a massive 2Mb in size) or just view individual route details, in a format that doesn't always print well on to A4 paper.

The 'maps' section offers a confusing choice of the high and low frequency networks, complete network or individual routes, reflecting Transdev's marketing strategy of concentrating on its high frequency core routes. Fares information is only given in summary, so I'm left to wonder how far a 'short hop', 'medium hop' and 'long hop' will take me.

You can also find your route via the index to places, but sadly — like the maps — these pages are not interactive, so you can't click through from the index or map directly to your chosen timetable — an unfortunate omission that slows down use of the site.

**Right:** Transdev has accelerated the conversion of Yellow Buses' core routes to low-floor operation by replacing some of its double-deckers with Dennis Dart SLFs acquired from Dawsonrentals. Plaxton Pointer 2-bodied 493 (W689 TNV) provides one of the new higher frequency routes.

**BEN MORROLL**

One page presents the Top 10 — a guide to places to visit by Yellow Buses, although the maths needs some work as apparently it could only find six culture spots, seven shopping places and five beaches. Still, it did locate 10 real ale pubs and 15 restaurants.

The 'about us' heading gives an abbreviated history of the undertaking and at the foot of the page there is a link to a 'current' fleetlist that is, in fact, dated August 2005 and therefore substantially misleading in the light of recent fleet changes. The new livery is illustrated, but you need to go to the 'news' heading and then select the final item, 'New Yellow Buses brand' to find it. When I started researching the site, this information was on a site of its own — [www.bybus.co.uk](http://www.bybus.co.uk) — but that now takes you directly to the main site. A useful page explaining the relationship between the old routes and the new network is hidden away as the final link on the 'maps' page.

## Language option translates everything

If it seems like I'm carping, let me praise one excellent feature that others would do well to copy. I've previously bemoaned the lack of foreign language information on UK operators' sites, even in towns and cities that attract lots of foreign visitors. Here, look for the seven small foreign flags that appear on each page. Just click on one and the whole site is translated into the appropriate language, courtesy of a Google service, <http://translate.google.com>.

This completely automated service will translate any web page you specify and is

easy to use and to code into websites, so why don't more operators use it? Perhaps the only unfortunate side effect is that it literally translates everything, including place names in timetables. Somehow, I don't think I'll find a number 6 displaying 'Quadrado' or 'Parque da Torre' (Portuguese for Square or Tower Park) on destination blinds and I'm not sure of the reply I'll get when asking the driver of my number 2 if the bus goes to 'Schloss-Weg' (German for Castle Lane).

As well as the Google site, there is a rival translation service provided by AltaVista at <http://babelfish.altavista.com/tr> (if you're a fan of Douglas Adams's *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, you'll recognise where the site name comes from) and both are free to use. In either case, just paste in a piece of text or a web page address, which is a great help when trying to look at foreign bus websites.

My score for this particular makeover? I'm afraid it only rates 7 out of 10, because of the poor navigation, unprintable timetables, vague fares information and out of date fleetlist. But a definite special mention for the translation feature.

There isn't room to review more makeovers this month but take a look at [www.reading-buses.co.uk](http://www.reading-buses.co.uk) and [www.wiltaxbuses.com](http://www.wiltaxbuses.com) and see what you think.

As usual, links to the featured sites are available at <http://efe.showbus.com/web> and I can be reached at [buses@signal-training.com](mailto:buses@signal-training.com). Thanks to Mark Lyons for his help with this month's column..







**Above:** First Edinburgh 61221 (YM52 UVT), a Wright Solar-bodied Scania L94UB originally in the Huddersfield fleet and used later by the Manchester-based West Coast rail replacement unit, climbs into North St Andrew Street, Edinburgh. Behind are the city's northern suburbs, the Firth of Forth and the Kingdom of Fife. **PHIL HALEWOOD**

**Below:** Amid the amusement arcades, gift shops and small hotels on Scarborough seafront, SS Suncruisers — the initials are those of owners Stephenson and Spalding — KBE 108P plies its trade as an open-top sightseeing bus. This Roe-bodied Daimler Fleetline was new to Grimsby-Cleethorpes Transport 30 years ago and has been in the SS fleet since 1993. **PHIL HALEWOOD**







**Above:** Harrogate & District 2709 (Y709 HRN), a Plaxton President-bodied Volvo B7TL new to sister company Burnley & Pendle, near Bramham village on route 770 (Leeds-Harrogate). The lorries behind are on the A1 Great North Road. **DANIEL STAZICKER**

**Below:** Stagecoach Wales 20885 (P885 MNE), the Northern Counties Paladin-bodied Volvo B10M-55 repainted to commemorate the Rhondda Tramways centenary, passing typical South Wales valleys terraced housing in Maerdy. **DANIEL STAZICKER**







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## Bournemouth relaunch needs more than frequency

Whatever 'research shows' (*Buses* July, p7), the frequency of Yellow Buses routes 20, 22 and 23 on the Bournemouth-Christchurch services was never a problem or concern about 'interval minutes'. Who cared? So many buses, one simply stepped on or off, as we still do.

But what has been irritatingly chaotic (not merely 'resistance to change' as Yellow Buses types aver) are the Town Square, 'logical' realignment of bus routes in numerical sequence, subtle route omissions and redirections. This is where truly appalling 'pavement edge passenger gather' is at its worst, adjacent to a clearly collapsing road surface where huge and splashy pools of dirty water collect on rainy days. This is public misery infliction.

Having to wait and board, old folk or young, stepping across a messy gap on to buses with seats so closed up in spacing causes me — at 5ft 8in, stiff limbed and retired — to splay my legs with knees uncomfortably against the seat backboard. It leaves me wondering who is in charge. Is this really the divine public transport concept envisaged by taxpayers? Thank heavens for short, jerky, noisy, bouncy journeys with brake dabbling-dawdle-and-race modern drivers.

When, say, six or more buses arrive at those town centre stops, you have to observe the daftest arrangements that planners can devise for alighting and boarding. What Bournemouth desperately needs is a coherent bus station, a sensible design that is weather proof and spacious, not a polyglot of cheap open shelters that drip rain and don't protect from the frequently cold winds.

Indeed, a cynic might conclude that Bournemouth's civil engineer and his controlling committee are so politicised that imagination is inhibited and haven't a clue about what to do to serve their town's resident and visitor bus-using multitudes, which grow bigger by the month.

Unless an input of imagination and will is exercised soon by the municipal authority, this excruciatingly medieval interface between passengers and those fleets of yellow and red buses, then increasing misery will render all these chic and colourful livery indulgences superfluous.

As an indication of small mind syndrome, look merely at the revised route number markers on bus stops. They are tiny. Any old fashioned sign designer would weep. Route numbers and routes should be writ large in black and white using the blunt end of a telephone pole dipped in Indian ink, not these poncey, computer-style fancy shapes that look as if they were created by a thick spectacled media studies graduate on speed. Typeface is better when it is simple and clear.



**Above:** Transdev Yellow Buses 494 (Y431 PBD), an East Lancs Spryte-bodied Dennis Dart SLF acquired from Dawsonrentals for the network revamp in Bournemouth. **MARK LYONS**

All this bitching doesn't really mean that Bournemouth isn't proud of its buttercup buses, but standing at an exposed stop in winter does excite less than complimentary thoughts about bus operations.

**John B. Talbot**  
Bournemouth

## London bus design has lost the plot

I am moved to add to the comments in June *Buses* on the relative comforts, or otherwise, of recent London bus design. The points made are perhaps most noticeable in London because of the sudden leap from Routemaster to the latest designs.

As a passenger I have been puzzled by the changes in layout that have seen the exit doors moved so that they do not align with the stairs. On busy journeys, alighting passengers have to negotiate standing passengers or mingle with those boarders seeking seats. To avoid this, drivers seem now to delay opening the entrance doors until passengers have left the vehicle — particularly prevalent at Waterloo in my experience. This undoes all the good bus priority efforts to improve journey times and means an effective acceptance of single door operation without the benefit of lower cost and increased seating capacity.

The straight staircases that consume extra space are acclaimed as a safety benefit but as a reasonably fit and able male, I regularly find myself at my limit to hold on, particularly when carrying bags, during acceleration and braking (which coincides with the usual timing for using the staircase). I have found the curved staircase, as found on the Routemaster and others, much better in providing bracing and avoiding the possibility of a straight tumble to the bottom.

And what has been achieved? More weight, increased fuel consumption and more wear and tear on the roads. I have heard it said that the long Routemaster (RML) was the most fuel-efficient mechanised means of transport on the planet, providing 72 seats at 7.2mpg. In reporting the demise of the Routemaster, the BBC went to some lengths to manipulate data to try to show that modern buses are more fuel-efficient. This is simply not true. I would be interested in data for the latest vehicles if they are available, however I have seen quoted previously figures for the Leyland Titan at 6.8mpg and Metrobus at 6.5mpg.

It seems that for various reasons, not all of them explicit, we have collectively lost the plot of common sense bus design — knowledge accumulated over years through operational experience. Or am I missing something?

**Paul Cheeseman**  
Walton on Thames

## Sorry to lose Stagecoach from London . . . sorry not to be losing artics as well

I, for one, will be very sorry to see the end of Stagecoach operations in London, and I say that as a regular traveller, not just an enthusiast who views it from a car. In my opinion, Stagecoach is the best London operator, with only London United (sorry, Transdev) and possibly the Go-Ahead companies comparable in their professionalism.

Generally speaking, Stagecoach vehicles and staff have the best presentation and their services are normally the most reliable as, according to the crews, it offers a better



pay deal and does not have staff shortages.

It was Stagecoach that took the initiative that no other operator did to change the exit door layout on its latest Alexander Dennis Tridents, to ensure that it is positioned sensibly opposite the staircase. It amazes me that all other operators continue to place long wheelbase double-deckers in service with the exit door situated ridiculously towards the rear of the bus, some distance from the staircase, resulting in severe delays when off-loading. What use is there in speeding up loading with OysterCards and passes when it takes longer to get off the bus? Could this be a Transport for London edict or are operators just too lazy or complacent to change the layout?

Stagecoach has also excelled with the heritage Routemaster service and continues to maintain these vehicles in exemplary condition. It certainly made a superb effort for the launch day. A pity that First missed the bus.

Anyway, thanks Stagecoach for showing most of the others how to do the job. Hopefully, the existing management will be retained and allowed to continue this tradition, if left alone by its new owners.

Although Stagecoach may not admit it, one cannot help feeling that TfL's political red tape has brought about this decision. On the subject of TfL, surely it is not rocket science to acknowledge that, for long distance urban bus routes, we need fast, frequent, comfortable (semi-coach seated) double-deckers with air conditioning (and heating systems that can be switched off successfully in the summer). What we don't need are TfL regulation tube trains on tyres.

Ken Livingstone and Peter Hendy are very keen to spend our money with the European influence, but they should be looking at Hong Kong and taking advice from operators like Kowloon Motor Bus. On reflection, London United got it right when it ordered those superb Alexander Royale Olympians for the Airbus services. Air-conditioned comfort with wheelchair access. What more could you want?

**David Brown**  
London N22

## Insufficiently Scottish?

On arriving at Exeter International Airport in July, we were refused travel on a Stagecoach 56 to central Exeter on the grounds that it does not accept Scottish money. The driver point blank refused to take money from us and asked us to leave her ex-Stagecoach London Dart. I mentioned to her that her employer's parent company was based in Scotland, but that didn't work. We got a taxi into town. The bill was £10.

**Keith McGillivray**  
Edinburgh

## Powered by Traveline

When reading Stephen Morris's article (Publicity Matters, July) it is important to appreciate that the 'massive database that

powers' Transport Direct is, in fact, Traveline. When you ask Transport Direct a question, it sends your question to the Traveline computers. If we can get it right in Traveline, it is likely to be right in all the services that rely on the Traveline databases, such as SMS, kiosks, the national phone service, some bus real time systems, a lot of roadside publicity, as well as journey planners on the web.

The vast majority of enquiries to Traveline are for local travel within a region, which the Traveline journey planners answer quickly and appropriately. For inter-regional travel, the website ([www.traveline.info](http://www.traveline.info)) advises that 'each (Traveline) region can plan journeys to or from rail stations and coach stops through the country. Go to Transport Direct for door-to-door travel between any two regions (except Northern Ireland)'.

**Peter J. Stoner**  
UK regional co-ordinator, Traveline

## We need co-ordination before 'ftr' pilots

Two articles on a similar theme caught my eye in July *Buses*, the follow up piece on the launch of First's tramcar lookalike buses in York and Andrew Braddock's Inside Track on getting about in Manchester.

Reading these reminded me of another piece on similar lines in which a government spokesman was promising us all a co-ordinated transport system. Yes, this was dated 1948, all of 58 years ago. Still we have to suffer non-connecting/disjointed services, absent or poor publicity, lack of understandable timetable information (to visitors in particular). The list goes on, as Andrew Braddock's piece ably illustrates. All this in a country that attracts large numbers of foreign tourists. In other words, a total lack of co-ordination.

Why can't we take a leaf out of Switzerland's book? As any visitor to that country will tell us, the Swiss have a first rate inter-connecting multi-modal transport system with excellent publicity, involving numerous large and small public and private operators, all in much more difficult operating terrain. Incidentally, they do not seem to require vandal-proof ticket machines either. I wonder why.

Brave effort though it may be, but does First's senior management really think that the good people of York will call these vehicles trams any more than Mancunians would call their proper trams 'light rail vehicles'? The response in York would probably be something like: 'Are you goin' on't fancy bus?' I wonder how many witty comments the driver's have received about the 'ftr pilot' lettering on their jackets.

**Tony Holdsworth**  
St Margaret's Hope, Orkney

## Disappointed by StreetCars

I went to York a few days after the 'ftr' service started. While the service was a real shambles, it was the StreetCar buses I

was interested in. I travelled on four vehicles and did the entire route. I was very disappointed with the buses. I did not find them at all comfortable, and the ambience (an awful word) was not good, especially when filled with a standing load of yacking students. They look vastly different to a conventional bus, but I found them no better than existing buses we have with First Bradford. I doubt they would attract drivers from a Model T let alone a modern car.

**Brian Whitaker**  
Bradford

## No blur

Andrew Braddock (Inside Track last month) was obviously unlucky to find an 'inky blur' where the operator's name should be on his 'ftr' ticket. The one I bought this morning (21 July) from one of First York's off-bus staff was very clearly labelled 'Alder Valley'.

**Phil Gilbert**  
Meppershall, Beds

## Courtesy in Derbyshire

I wonder if you would publish an article on how the buses compare in different parts of the UK in catering for disabled and elderly people and where improvements are needed.

Several buses in Derbyshire do cater for disabled people, but some don't and my wheelchair can be sadly in the way. The wonderful thing my husband and I do find, though, is that the bus drivers are very thoughtful, patient and helpful when getting on and off. When we lived in London, although many buses were disabled friendly, most bus drivers were in a rush and we witnessed some accidents.

We don't see many, actually none so far of dangerous incidents where passengers attack people in Derbyshire, but in London we saw a lot of bus rage. The bus drivers handle the incidents really well and can only be praised when they and/or passengers are threatened.

**Esther John**  
New Houghton, Mansfield

## Wheelchair accessibility

I'm sorry if Alastair Stewart (You Write last month) was offended by my comments. However, I am equally offended by his implication that anybody who criticises the current Disability Discrimination Act legislation must be uncaring about disabled people. In my case, nothing could be farther from the truth. My father-in-law is confined to a wheelchair, but never uses buses because it is simply not practical for him to do so for a whole host of reasons. And my elderly mother is disabled in that she needs a walking stick to get about and she finds using low-floor buses a terrible ordeal, as the wide entrance means a lack of grab rails and once on board it is a long walk to the seating ►



area, if indeed any seats are available. Is it really acceptable to expect elderly and infirm passengers to have to stand?

**Steven Ford**  
Chelmsford

## Tutting and huffing

I should like to reassure Mr Stewart (You Write last month) that impatient tutting and huffing is not reserved for wheelchair users. In London, and I assume elsewhere, it is meted out without favour to anyone perceived as causing a delay or inconvenience, however slight.

I would also like to mention that wheelchair users can be just as ignorant and rude as the rest of us. I offer this example. On a 211 at Westminster last month (June) while waiting for the centre door ramp to complete its deployment cycle (around 30sec?), the wheelchair-bound passenger rang the bell at least six times, accompanied by a shout of: 'Oi! I need to \*\*\*\*\* get off here.' I assume that translates roughly as: 'Thank you, driver,' something sadly no one seems to bother with these days.

**Clive Lawrence**  
Redhill

● *As passengers in Glasgow, to name but one place, still regularly say 'Thank you, driver', has it only fallen out of use in London and other places with two-door buses and off-bus ticketing? Please tell us your experiences, either as a passenger or a driver. — Ed.*

## Bendies are better than some drivers

The new Cardiff Bus articulated bendibuses (Buses July) are a welcome addition to the fleet as they cut down on congestion and the constant need to stand on the busy routes upon which they operate. They are comfortable to travel on and feature all the benefits of modern technology. The use of more bus shelters with digital time displays also helps.

The only thing that hasn't improved, I feel, over the years that I've been travelling on Cardiff Bus is the attitude of some of the drivers. While most are friendly, welcoming and helpful, there are some who have attitude problems, bark orders at the passengers and tell people to hurry up when they board the bus and are searching for money. These drivers spoil it for the rest, who are striving to create a good company image.

While waiting at Cardiff Central Station one night, I overheard a bus driver telling a passenger off for dropping litter on the bus, which is fair enough I thought until he kicked the rubbish on to the floor, went back to his cab and proceeded to tip his own rubbish out of the window. Often when getting off, there are some drivers who appear so miserable

and hard pressed that they just drop you off and go. They don't smile or appreciate your call of thanks. These are the factors that I feel let down what is otherwise a well-run passenger orientated service.

**Paul Grayburn**  
Cardiff

## Just like Arriva?

I was interested to see the picture of one of Cardiff's final two articulated Scania in Fleet News last month. Of all the colours available in the rainbow, the council chose the one colour that draws comparison with another major UK bus operator. Have the boys from Sunderland made an offer for this company, or is the council just hedging its bets, given that First and Stagecoach already operate in South Wales?

**Richard Cranmer**  
Heighington Village, Co. Durham

## DPs yes, seatbelts no, double-decks please

I disagree with the correspondence advocating seatbelts on coaches and dual purpose vehicles. As well as taking up valuable legroom, which has diminished in recent years with the trend toward relatively hard single-piece seats, this — as often depicted on *Crimewatch UK* — is not a crime-free public transport country.

It is therefore essential that passengers have to at least have a chance of defending themselves. After all, taxi drivers are exempt. In addition, Buses often reports on vehicles catching fire (a rapid evacuation essential) and, likewise, it is possible for a bus to break down on an unstaffed railway level crossing.

As for DPs, I think operators are burying their heads in the sand by not ordering new vehicles for 2008 delivery when pensioners will qualify for England-wide free travel. For example, Arriva North East long distance services 685 (Newcastle-Carlisle), 93 (Middlesbrough-Scarborough) and 505 (Newcastle-Berwick) run close to capacity in daytimes and service enhancements are needed.

Stagecoach North East, despite admitting that Newcastle cross-city services 12, 39/40 and 62/63 are the best performing outside London, has not increased frequencies since OAP free travel began. This despite a large number of letters in the local press every night usually blaming the pensioners though some target schoolkids who should walk, the unemployed who should stay in and buggy-wheeling single mothers who should emigrate.

Ironically, services 12 and 39/40 were double-deck operated, but owing to a few mindless morons damaging seats — usually on a Sunday when double-deckers weren't needed — these went to Manchester. Now with vandal-proof hard seats, why not bring

them back with an extension of peak services to 19.00, instead of buses returning farcically to the two depots just after 17.00.

**Malcolm Plows**  
Newcastle-upon-Tyne

## Free travel? What free travel? Not round here

In parts of the country, the elderly have had free bus travel for some time. Before the 2005 general election, we were promised free off-peak travel in England. This will not come into force nationwide for two years. Meantime, we were to be given free local bus travel. In South Cambridgeshire we do not have that privilege.

Before April, I could travel at half fare at any time in the whole of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. Now I can, in theory, travel after 09.30 in South Cambridgeshire district only. South Cambridgeshire consists of a ring of several dozen villages surrounding the city of Cambridge — rather like the mint with the hole. It has no towns, so hardly anyone travels by bus entirely within the district. Almost all passengers travel to or from Cambridge or one of the market towns on the perimeter of the area like Saffron Walden, Royston, Potton, St Neots or St Ives, all in other districts and, in some cases, in other counties. We all have to pay when crossing a border.

I now pay a little less when travelling to and from Cambridge at off-peak times, but much more if I want to use the early bus or if I wish to travel on to Cambridge railway station. Orwell has four buses each day, except Sundays, to and from Cambridge and one bus a week to Royston. Some villages have only peak-time buses. I believe East Cambridgeshire residents may have similar problems, as several villages in that district look to Newmarket (Suffolk) for shopping.

This is a well-intentioned scheme that was not properly thought out or adequately funded. I hope it will be amended before 2008.

**Philip Mountford**  
Orwell, Cambs

## Peckham garage

I'm sorry to say I have found an inaccuracy in John Aldridge's review of *London Transport Garages* (Buses last month). He refers to the postwar Peckham Garage (PM) having been built as a tram replacement facility. Not so, for that was the replacement for the former Thomas Tilling premises flattened by World War 2 bombing. The tram replacement garage in that area was Rye Lane (RL), which like Stockwell (SW) was conceived originally as a depot for the proposed South London trolleybus scheme, which sadly failed to materialise.

**Tim Hall**  
London SW15



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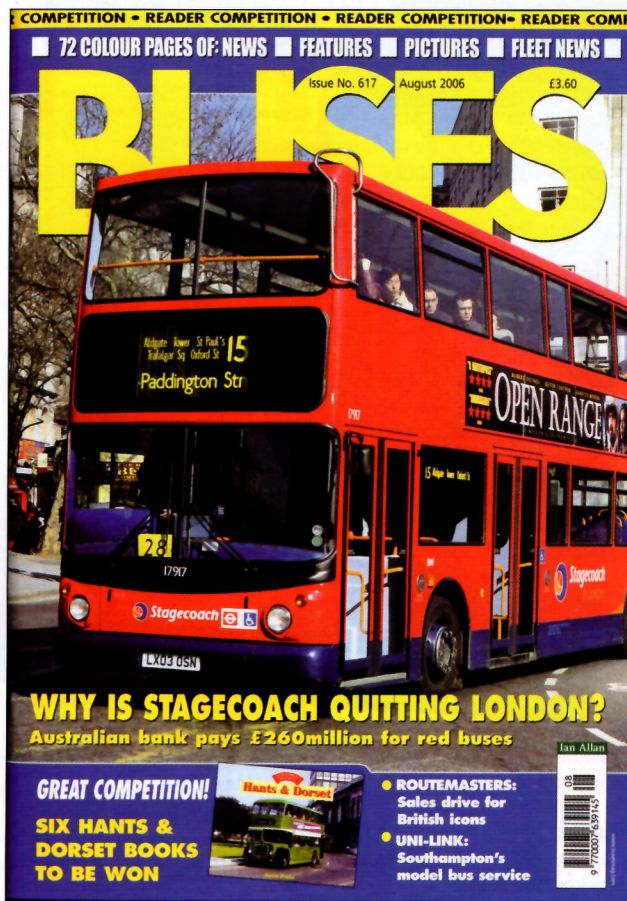
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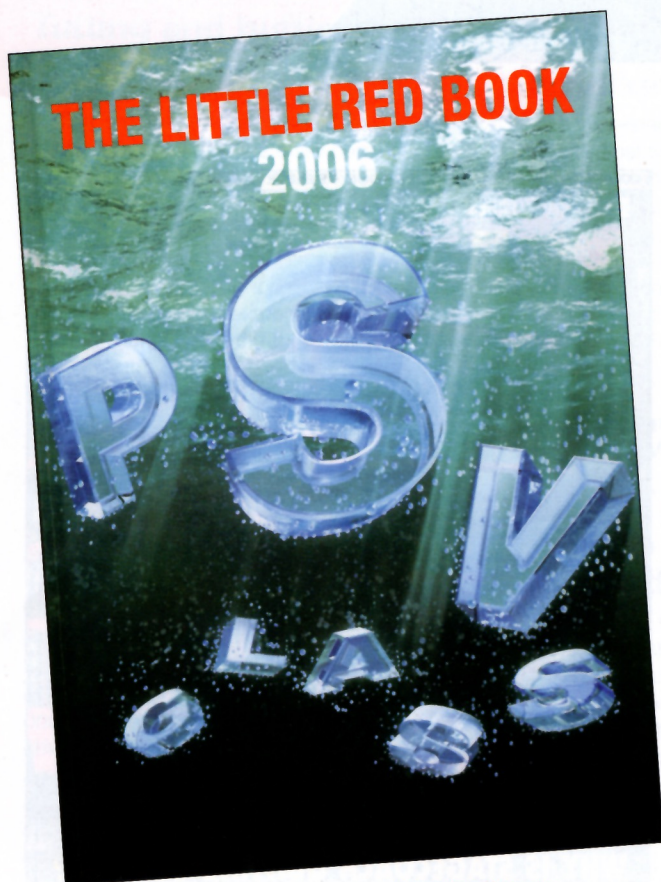
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New for LRB 2007 is the introduction of a new section Bus Rapid Transit Vehicles, and the re-naming of the Tramway & Light Transit Equipment to Rapid Transit/Priority Equipment reflecting the increased emphasis on bus-based rapid transit systems rather than rail. Not all updated entries will be shown after June as most of the replies come in between May and August and it would not be practicable. The Little Red Book is published in September, in time for the coach and bus shows in the Autumn.



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# Shopping list for Lakeland bus travel

**CHRIS CARTER** admires the flagship magazine format timetable that Stagecoach produces for its Cumbrian leisure market routes

**S**tagecoach North West's 44-page full-colour A4-size *The Lakesrider* timetable guide exploits the natural beauty of Cumbria's Lake District. This lavishly illustrated marketing tool for Stagecoach's main services in the Lake District used to be called *Lakeland Explorer* and it creates the desire to explore the area by bus. It would have provided my former university marketing lecturer with enough material to fill a complete lecture — and perhaps made them a lot more compelling into the bargain.

Keen to support local businesses, Stagecoach has contracted its production to Badger Press, based in Bowness-on-Windermere. 'The magazine is our flagship production, to promote our Cumbria summer network,' explains Stagecoach North West marketing manager Colin Nicholson. 'It is the single most expensive publicity item we produce and is part-funded by advertisements. It is available on board buses in the central Lakes, tourist information centres in Cumbria, all Stagecoach travel shops and local hotels.'

The old guide started out in 1990 as a simple black-and-white publication and was produced annually until its 2005 makeover. Today, it complements the company's ticket offers and such promotional products as its *A to B to See* leaflets — five free scenic guides to exploring the Lake District by different bus routes that the company produced in partnership with Mark Richards, a local fell walker and writer, who has also prepared a new *Strolling through the Lakes* leaflet for Stagecoach with 12 easy going walks.

This year's guide includes details of the relaunched 599 Lakes Rider open-top service, for which the fleet of ex-London Leyland Titans has been repainted in corporate colours and refurbished with new seats and flooring.

## Not in numerical order

The contents are listed in page number order, so the timetables don't appear in sequential route number order through the guide as one might expect. Each service has its own colour-coded dot (or dots) in the contents to show in which region (or regions) it operates. Correspondingly, timetable pages have a colour-coded right-hand edge. While some thought appears to have gone into this elaborate system for ease of use, I found it much simpler to look up route numbers in my chosen area by referring to the map within the guide. In any case, each individual timetable has a useful inset circle containing a simple map of Cumbria, highlighting the particular region in which the service operates.

The individual timetables are all produced to a high standard, and the large format of the guide allows them to be spaced out well. Bold route numbers appear at the top of each timetable, which helps

compensate for their not being in numerical order. Days of operation are shown as bold headers, important as some routes have limited seasonal periods of operation.

The FWT-produced Cumbria County Council public transport map is included as the centre page spread. To fit the guide, this large map has been printed in a rather small scale, making the text difficult to read in places. However, the inclusion of this geographical map is welcome. Not only does it categorise services by frequency, but it also shows rail, ferry and National Express coach services as well as useful tourist information. The previous two pages feature *A quick guide to services in the central Lakes*, an enterprising and well laid-out tourist map. It shows relevant bus routes in the area among the lakes and peaks, together with information and pictures of various tourist attractions.

The guide details the comprehensive range of rover and inclusive day out tickets available on p3, but the helpful *Using the Stagecoach bus could not be easier* section doesn't appear until after halfway through the guide. I prefer these things to be nearer the beginning.

Another feature that may help boost patronage is the *Let the bus be your taxi for a pint* double page spread, which provides information on a selection of local hotels and inns appraised by the Campaign for Real Ale (Camra). A summary of relevant lunchtime and evening journeys on the prime 'Lakeslink' service 555/556 is shown for clarity, together with a route map. The guide also advertises the new [www.cumbriabus.info](http://www.cumbriabus.info) website that the company produced in partnership with Cumbria County Council.



## Maltese Transport News

L-Ahbarijiet dwar it-Trasport f' Malta



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WORLDWIDE**

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We want to hear from readers, operators and transport authorities about how the industry is tackling the challenge of imparting accessible information to the travelling public — whether in timetables, leaflets or maps, at bus stops, bus stations or on the Internet. If you find items of interest (tell us about the good just as much as about the bad) and could write about 600 words on the subject, accompanied by photographs and/or publicity material, please contact the Editor at the Leven address shown on p2 or send an e-mail to [buseseditor@btconnect.com](mailto:buseseditor@btconnect.com)



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## IN FLEET NEWS THIS MONTH

- **First tri-axle Sunsundegui for Abbott**
- **Last-ever Tridents go to Blackpool and Isle of Man**
- **Finglands orders Enviro300 single-decks**
- **Volvo B6 enters Honister Slate Mine**
- **Thamesdown buys Leyland Olympians**

### BODY TYPE

|    |                                                                                                                                      |
|----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| AB | Articulated single-deck bus                                                                                                          |
| AC | Articulated coach                                                                                                                    |
| B  | Rigid single-deck bus                                                                                                                |
| C  | Coach                                                                                                                                |
| DP | Dual purpose, usually coach seats in a bus shell                                                                                     |
| H  | Double-decker                                                                                                                        |
| L  | Lowbridge double-decker with side sunken gangway upstairs. All other double-deckers are H (highbridge) regardless of overall height. |
| M  | Minibus                                                                                                                              |
| O  | Permanent open-top                                                                                                                   |
| CO | Convertible open-top                                                                                                                 |
| PO | Partial open-top                                                                                                                     |

### SEATING CAPACITY

For double-deckers, this is shown with the upper deck capacity first (e.g. 43/30, indicating 43 'over' 30. Where the split is not known, a total figure (e.g. 73) is shown in the same style as for single-deckers. The total seating capacity shown includes all fixed and tip-up seats. The vehicles themselves may show other permutations of seats, standing spaces and wheelchair capacity.

### DOOR POSITION

|    |                                                                              |
|----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| F  | Front (can be directly behind front axle on vehicles with no front overhang) |
| R  | Rear                                                                         |
| RD | Rear with platform doors                                                     |
| C  | Centre                                                                       |
| D  | Dual (two) doors                                                             |
| T  | Triple doors                                                                 |

The letter 't' after the door position indicates the provision of a toilet, while 'L' after the door position shows that a wheelchair lift is fitted.

### REGISTRATIONS

Registration numbers issued from 1 September 2001 show a two-letter area identification code (e.g. BU for Birmingham, CU for Swansea, SX for Inverness), followed by a two-digit code indicating the period of first registration (e.g. 51 for September 2001 to February 2002, 02 for March to August 2002, 52 for September 2002 to February 2003, 03 for March to August 2003 and so on. These are followed by a three-letter identification of the vehicle itself. In 'Fleet News', a batch of vehicles with consecutively issued registrations will be shown in the following fashion: LS34-46 (GG51 PYS/TV-Z, PZB-F/H). The letters I and Q are not used in these three-letter combinations.

Where a vehicle has been re-registered, its previous registration number(s) (where known) follow in *italic type* (e.g. RM48 (LDS 199A, *VLT 48*), with the most recent given first.

#### 1st Choice, Whittlesey, Cambs

Former First Eastern Counties Mercedes-Benz 609D/Frank Guy N612 GAH is an acquisition.

#### Aardvark Coaches, Peterborough

Leyland Olympian/ECW acquired are ex-Stagecoach East DPH42/30F C179 ECK and DPH42/29F C962 XVC, and ex-Arriva North West H45/32F B198 DTU.

#### Abbott, Leeming, N Yorks

This operator has the first two 13.75m Sunsundegui Sideral 2000 C57Ft on three-axle Volvo B12B chassis. OK/XK06 AOL follow three 12m B12B/Sunsundegui delivered last year, Abbott's first new Volvos in 18 years.

#### ACE Travel, Aintree

Former Glenvale Volvo B6/Alexander Dash B40F M727 BCS is an acquisition. B6 M343 NOD has been repainted in brown and cream fleet livery.

#### Aintree Coachline, Bootle

Leyland Olympian ONCL10/1RZ/Northern Counties H47/30F F259 YTJ has replaced Olympian/ECW JFR 8W. Also acquired is Olympian ONCL10/1RZ/Alexander RL H47/32F G864 XDX, ex-Chambers, Bures. Volvo B12B/Plaxton UK03 ACL has been written off with accident damage. Volvo B10M/Plaxton P331 VWR has been re-registered HKF 151 while Leyland Titan HKF 151 (NHM 466X, 124 CLT, KYV 322X) has been withdrawn and re-registered back to NHM 466X.

**Right:** Arriva Midlands 4749 (FJ06 ZSU), one of the new Wright Pulsar Gemini-bodied VDL DB250s delivered as part of the group's investment in its Leicester area services. These are the first Pulsar Geminis that Arriva has bought for services outside London. **BEN MORROLL**

#### Airparks, Manchester

MAN 14.220/MCV Evolution W555, 666, 777 APS are used on car park services at Manchester Airport.

#### Alpine, Llandudno

New is appropriately-registered Mercedes-Benz Touro/Caetano AP06 ALP.

Leyland Olympian/ECW BJZ 6751 (CWR 506Y) has been withdrawn, its Northern Irish registration mark to be transferred to another vehicle. Leyland National GMB 392T has been withdrawn again. Bristol VRT/SL3/ECW YMB 503W has been cannibalised and sold to Wigley, Carlton (dealer). Iveco G142 JJC has been scrapped.

Thanks to Ivor Bufton for this month's update.

#### Ambassador, Great Yarmouth

Volvo B10M/Plaxton Excalibur PJL 5633 has been downgraded to contracts from tours. Volvo B10M/Plaxton Premiere V436 EAL has been written off.

#### Arriva Cymru AA

Optare Tempo 2867 (YJ06 YRY) is new at Aberswyth. At long last, as intended earlier, Dennis Dart SLFs 2601-8 (R601-4/85/06-8 MHN) have been renumbered 2101-8.

Ex-Blue Bus Mercedes Vario/Plaxton Beaver 2 B27F 395-8 (V941 KAG, MV02 XYJK, MK52 XNS) and former MTL Dennis Dart SLF/Plaxton Pointer 7559 (R559 ABA) have been transferred from Arriva North West.

Leyland Tiger/Alexander N-type 1772 (F52 ENF) has been operated on minibus services 512/513 in south Cambria. Open-top routes have been operated by Leyland Olympian/Alexander 3984/7 (E224/7 WBG), Bristol VRT/SL3/ECW 3992 (YMB 512W) and MCW Metrobuses.

Accident-damaged DAF SB3000/Van Hool coach 5004 (NEY 819) reverted to original registration M944 LYR before disposal, but 5003 (M945 LYR) continues in service. Mercedes-Benz Vario/Mellor 355 (R962 FYS) has passed to Staffordshire Bus Centre, Cotes Heath (dealer).

Caernarfon outstation closed on 27 May, its vehicles and staff transferring to Bangor.

#### Arriva London AA

Additions to **The Original London Sightseeing Tour** are ex-New World First Bus, Hong Kong, 12m O61/35D MCV Metrobuses EMB776/7 (A737/5 WEV). MCW Metroliners ML10/4/9, 20-2/8/9, 33 (B240 LRA, A114 KFX, ILL 7269, B224 VHW, B121 ORU, B222 VHW, B824/5 AAT, C133 CFB) have been sold to Blythswood (dealer), Glasgow, while ML13 (A113 KFX) has been scrapped.

#### Arriva Midlands AA

Further new VDL DB250/Wright Pulsar Gemini at Leicester are 4747-52 (FJ06 ZTP, ZST-X).

Further to last month, the first Midland Fox Leyland Olympian, 4501 (A501 EJF) has after all gone to the 4501





Group for preservation; it hopes to complete engine repairs in time for it to appear at EFE Showbus International on 24 September. Similar 4509 (A509 EJF) has gone to Ensignbus (dealer), Purfleet.

### Arriva North East AA

New Scania OmniCity single-deckers are expected for services X6 and 81 and Alexander Dennis Mini Pointer Darts are due for service 518, all of which have been awarded Kick-Start funding; one existing vehicle will also be refurbished for the 81.

DAF DB250/Northern Counties 7452 (R209 CKO) was being prepared for service at Ashington in July, and 7448 (R205 CKO) is in service, converted to single-door — it was initially numbered 7447. Scania N113DRB/Northern Counties 7254 (M179 LYP) has been joined by 7255 (M180 LYP).

More Volvo B6/Plaxton Pointer B38F transferred from Arriva North West are 4539/40 (L225/31 TKA), which replaced Leyland Lynx 2s 5012/3 (J652/3 UHN) — transferred to Arriva Scotland West (Fleet News last month) — at Bishop Auckland. Scania L113CRL/East Lancs 274/6 (P274/6 VRG) are out of service at Ashington.

Having been stored engineless at Darlington in recent months, Mercedes-Benz Vario/Plaxton Beaver 2658 (SB22 MCC) has been reinstated at Ashington, replacing Optare MetroRider 912 (R912 JNL). MAN 11.190/Optare Vecta 1537 (L537 FHN) was re-activated at Redcar, only to go into reserve along with 1510 (K510 BHN); Mini Pointer Darts 1725/7 (V725/7 DNL) replaced them. Reserve DAF SB220/Optare Delta 4096 (G257 UYK) is back in service at Loftus.

Unused Leyland Olympian/ECW 7225/6 (D231/40 FYM) are awaiting disposal and Optare MetroRider 890 (N890 RTN) is being cannibalised at Alnwick.

### Arriva North West AA

Further ex-Arriva London DAF DB250/Alexander ALX400 H45/17D are 4025-8 (S265-8 JUA), latterly with Arriva Southern Counties. Similar 4020-2 (S269-71 JUA) have been renumbered 4029-31, and 4029 has been rebuilt to H45/20F layout and equipped with Hanover destination displays.

Leyland Lynx 1752 (H254 PAJ) appeared briefly at Runcorn, but has since gone to Bootle workshops with 1743/7/54/5 (G49 CVC, G327 NUM, J654/5 UHN) for conversion into driver trainers. Similar 1752/7 (H254 PAJ, K27 EWC) have become driver trainers 8176/5.

Mercedes-Benz Vario/Plaxton Beaver 2 B27F 395-8 (V941 KAG, MV02 XYJ/K, MK52 XNS) and Dennis Dart SLF/Plaxton Pointer 7559 (R559 ABA) have been transferred to Arriva Cymru.

Merseytravel's hybrid Optare Solos for services S2/S3 (Liverpool City Centre-Princess Dock), 651-6 (MX54 YZR/T/U, MKL-N), have gone into store at Bootle, replaced at first by Volvo B6/Plaxton Pointers 7238/41/2 (L238 TKA etc) drafted in from Skelmersdale, later by Mini Pointer Darts 803/6/10-3 (S873/6 KNB, T62-5 JBA).

Leyland Olympian/ECW 3122 (C212 GTU) has been in normal service at Bootle, rather than solely for rail replacement. Volvo B6/Plaxton Pointers 7225/31 (L225/31 TKA) have gone to Arriva North East.

Further ex-Blue Bus Dennis Lances withdrawn are the sole Plaxton Verde example, 1900 (L205 VAG) and Alexander PS-type 1925/6/9/30/4 (J105/6/9/10/4 WSC); further to last month's reports, Lances 1921-4/7/8/32/3 (J101-4/7/8/12/33 WSC) have been sold to Blythwood, Glasgow (dealer), but 1932 (J112 WSC) was still in service — in Blue Bus colours — in July.

Ex-Blue Bus Optare MetroRiders 77/9 (R227/9 SCH) and Volvo Citybus/Alexander RV-type 3671/2 (H113/5 ABV) have been sold to North West Bus Sales, Bolton, while Mercedes-Benz Vario/Plaxton Beavers 164/5 (P524/5 UGA) were sold to North West Bus Sales, Bolton (dealer), which sold them on to Hilton, Newton le Willows, Citybuses 3647/51/90/2 (G647/51 EKA, H660/2 GPF) went to Ensign (dealer), Purfleet, and MetroRider 95 (P310 CXW) is with JP, Middleton. Citybus 3671 later appeared with Ayrways, Ayr.

Mercedes-Benz Vario/Plaxton Beaver 2 301 (R801 YJC) has been sold to the new Blue Bus — Whittaker, Penwortham — while 307/8/11/34/43/53 (R804/5/8 YJC, R103/13/23 TKO) went to Dunn Line. Mercedes 709Ds 148/65 (P658 KEY, P525 UGA) have gone to North West Bus Sales (dealer), ECW-bodied Leyland Olympians 3022/39 (A152 UDM, A139 MRN) to Riaz, Blackburn and Olympian/Alexander 3227 (F97 PRE) is with Redline of Penwortham.

Huyton depot closed on 10 June. Its allocation was dispersed to Liverpool Green Lane and St Helens.

### Arriva Southend AA

Following engine failure, Southend United FC-liveried Leyland Olympian/Alexander RL-type 5393 (F573 SMG) has been withdrawn and replaced by the first Volvo B6 here, Plaxton Pointer-bodied 3609 (L609 EKM).

### Arriva Southern Counties AA

Ex-London DAF DB250s 6220-3 (S265-8 JUA) have gone to Arriva North West, while Dennis Darts 3087 (P287 FPK) and 3112/3 (L112/3 YVK) have been sold, 3112/3 to Stephenson, Rochford (dealer).

### Arriva the Shires & Essex AA

The new Mercedes-Benz Citaros for Green Line route 724 (Harlow-Heathrow), 3901-9 (BU06 HSD-G/J-L/N/O), have displaced DAF SB220/Plaxton Prestige 3441-9 (R201-9 VPU) on to the 500 (Watford-Aylesbury). Further red VDL SB120/Wright Cadet B28F for London work are 3711-5 (YE06 HRA-C/D/F/G).

Withdrawn are Mercedes-Benz 709D 2136 (N916 ETM), 811Ds 2408/9/17 (M455/6 UUR, N177 DWM) and Leyland Olympian/Roe driver trainer 5073 (A153 FPG). Dennis Dart/Marshall 3103 (L300 BUS), DAF SB220/Optare Delta 3328 (G621 YMG), Leyland Lynx 3344 (H254 GEV), Dart/Wright Handybus 3374 (K761 JVX) and Olympians 5133, 5889 (H203 GRO, A889 PKR) have gone for scrap while Bristol VRT 5866 (FKM 866V) has been sold. Mercedes 709D 2144 (N374 JGS) has gone to Goldline, Ellough, Suffolk, and Vario 2161 (P671 PNM) to Pickford, Chippenham.

### Arriva Yorkshire AA

The ECW-bodied Olympian is now in its final stages here, with only 541/75/7/80/4, 603/4/9/11 remaining at Belle Isle and 566, 606/12 at Selby following the withdrawal of 581 and 610 (A581 NWX, C610 ANW) from Belle Isle and 600 (B600 UUM) from Selby.

Staffordshire Bus Centre, Cotes Heath (dealer) has taken redundant DAF SB220/Optare Delta 51 (H512 YCX), Dennis Dart/Carlyle Dartline 152 (H878 LOX), Optare MetroRiders 749/56/7 (M749 WWR, N756/7 LWW), Mercedes-Benz 760 (N172 WNF) and Olympian 600. Volvo Citybus 768 (G639 BPH) has also been sold.

### AT Buses, Thorpe, Surrey

This new operator has gained a licence for five vehicles and a school service. The fleet comprises MCW Metrobuses WYW 22T, A875 SYF, B100, 264/72 WUL, C351 BUV.

### Avon, Prenton, Wirral

More Dennis Lance SLF/Berkhof converted to single-door are B4 AVN and M966 SDP.

### Birmingham Coach Company GA

Go-Ahead's Hampshire Body & Paint is expected to repaint 200 vehicles here.

### Blackburn Transport

The as-yet-unregistered Scania N230UB/East Lancs Esteem demonstrator has been inspected here.

Dennis Trident 4 (LUF 549) has been repainted as an overall advertisement for Beez Buzz Card identification cards for 13 to 15-year-olds, while ex-Lothian Leyland Olympian 32 (A703 YFS) is in Schools+ livery.

Leyland Titans 96/7 (KYV 526/17X) are reunited at People's Bus, Bootle, while Leyland National Greenways 429/30 (YEV 317/24S) have been sold.

### Blackpool Transport

New for Line 11 are Dennis Trident/East Lancs Millennium Lolyne 328-32 (PF06 EZL-P).

They are the last Tridents for a mainland UK fleet and have replaced Leyland Atlantear/East Lancs 352-4 (UHG 352-4Y), which have been withdrawn. 332 is named *Arthur Topham* in memory of a former Blackpool Transport director, who died recently. The

**Right: The first Optare Solo in the Brighton & Hove fleet, 301 (LW52 AFA), entered service on 6 July on the Portslade-Haslemere circular services. It was transferred from fellow Go-Ahead subsidiary Metrobus. MARK LYONS**

new buses are among 11 Tridents and 14 DAF SB220s in Line 11 livery. Optare Tempo X1200 demonstrators YJ55 BJX, YJ06 FXK have also been used on Line 11.

Atlantear/East Lancs 350 (GHG 350W) has replaced 492 (NIW 6492, DRH 327L), which spent six years with Blackpool Council Operational Services Department as a track gang vehicle. Engineless 351 (UHG 351Y) has gone to a preservationist for spares.

Of the vehicles acquired with the City Sightseeing tours in Blackpool and Manchester (News last month), former Arriva London Leyland Olympian ONLXB/1RH/ECW H42/26D 818 (D218 FYM) has been converted to O42/26D for the Blackpool Tour — service 1 (Pontins-Cleveleys), which has not had open-toppers for seven years, with 813/49 (D213/49 FYM) and MCW Metrobuses 815/64 (VRG 415T, A964 SYF) as back-up. O43/28D Metrobuses 802/92 (BYX 302V, GYE 392W) and single-door O43/30F 814 (BOK 69V) are based at Trafford Park for the Manchester Tour.

Optare Solo 249 (YN53 ZWK) has been repainted from Line 5 (red/yellow) into Line 2 (green/yellow) livery, for Knott End service 2C. Volvo Olympian 378 (M378 SCK) is in black and yellow pool livery and acquired Leyland Olympians 407/10 (A707/10 DAU) have been repainted into Line 1 livery, but 404 (XAU 704Y), in Line 20 colours, has been out of action since March following engine failure. Optare MetroRider 513 (S513 LHG) has returned to service after accident damage.

### Bluebird, Middleton

Ex-Compass, Burgess Hill Dennis/Plaxton Mini Pointer Dart B29F 51 (Y251 KNB) rejoins 52/4 (Y252/4 KNB).

### Blue Bus, Penwortham, Lancs

As reported in News last month, former Blue Bus, Bolton proprietor Roger Jarvis has acquired Whittaker of Penwortham and has revived the Blue Bus name. Vehicles taken over were all Mercedes-Benz midibuses — 709D/Alexander B25F K858 ODY, PAZ 5359 (E92 YWB); B29F M304 TSF, M372 EFD; B23F PAZ 8034 (G190 PAO); 709D/Plaxton Beaver B27F N910 ETM and Vario O814D/Plaxton Beaver 2 B27F P530/43/54 PNE and C32F R738 EGD.

### Blue Triangle, Rainham, Essex

AEC Routemasters added to the fleet are RM346, 713, 1975 (SVS 615, WLT 346; TSK 270, WLT 713; ALD 975B), acquired from Nash (dealer), Cobham in exchange for Leyland Titans T499, 863, 969 (KYV 499X, A863 SUL, A969 SYE).

### Bowers, Chapel-en-le-Frith

In addition to new Optare Solo YJ06 FXP, another Solo acquired from Bebb, Llantwit Fardre is M920/DP27F YJ54 UBH. Withdrawn are Leyland National URB 471S, Mercedes-Benz LIL 7568 (E468 AWF), MIL 4685 (E308 BWL), NIL 8163 (G52 BEL) and V332 EAK, and Neoplan coach YN03 AWY.

### Brent Thomas, Tonypandy

New is Volvo B12M/Jonckheere Mistral C51ft FJ06 ZLO.

### Brighton & Hove GA

Dennis Dart/Plaxton Pointer 83 (M97 WBW) and Dennis Lance/Optare Sigma 106 (N406 NPN) are with the driving school, but Darts 82 (M96 WBW) and Lance 110 (N410 NPN) have been reinstated for further service. Darts 81-3 (MBW 95-7W), acquired with Stagecoach's Lewes business, are not to be repainted as they are due for disposal.





**Brown, Built Wells**

New is Optare Solo/B23F YJ06 FXY.

**Bull Ring Travel, West Bromwich**

Acquired from Ensign (dealer), Purfleet are ex-Arriva Southern Counties Dennis Dart/Northern Counties B35F L148 YVK and former OK Travel Volvo B6/Alexander Dash B40F M419 PVN.

**Bu-Val, Littleborough, Gtr Manchester**

Ex-Beaumont, Gloucester Dennis Dart SLF/Alexander ALX200 B33F VX51 RDO has been acquired.

**Castleways, Winchcombe**

The latest coach for this immaculate Gloucestershire fleet is FJ06 BNV, a Volvo B7R with Sunsundegui Sideral C55F body.

**Centra, London**

Following the loss of Transport for London contracts, Optare Solos OS1-4 (KX51 UCS-V) and Dennis Dart SLFs DP32-4, 41-3/6/7 (W132 WGT etc), DP51-9, 75-7, 80 (T151-9 OGC, T875-7/80 HGT), 540/4/7/9 (V540 JBH etc) are in store at Ensignbus (dealer), Purfleet, which will sell them on behalf of Dawsonrentals.

**Centrebus**

The four new VDL SB120/Plaxton Centro B40F for Luton route 10 are FH06 KGK, KE06 NZW/X, RXL. Also acquired are former Travel West Midlands Mercedes-Benz Vario/Alexander ALX100 B27F R243/8 XDA.

**Chaufeurs, Birmingham**

New for this 12-vehicle coach fleet are Setra S315 GT-HDs BU06 CUW/Y.

**Click Services, Pemberton**

Former Arriva Liverpool Optare MetroRider L208 ONU has been acquired.

**Coastal Liner, Wolverhampton**

Former Transdev Yellow Buses Dennis Dominator/East Lancs H47/33F H263 MFX, J268 SPR have been acquired via Ensignbus (dealer), Purfleet, to whom MCW Metrobuses A620/47 BCN have been sold.

**Compass Travel, Durrington, Sussex**

New are MAN 14.220/MCV Evolution B40F MRM1, 2 (AE06 VPY/Z).

**Cook, Wellington, Somerset**

New Optare Solos are B28F YJ06 FZN, dedicated to service 382 (Sidmouth-Whimble), YJ06 FYX for service 99 (Taunton-Merriott) and larger B37F YJ06 YSR/S for service 20 (Taunton-Seaton). Thanks to Paul Landmore for this update on his fleet.

**Cosgrove, Preston**

Volvo B12M/Van Hool Alizée YJ06 LCT is new.

**Countryliner, Guildford**

A DAF SB220/East Lancs Millennium B46F has been acquired from Courtney, Bracknell. Also acquired are



**Above:** The new Sunsundegui Sideral-bodied Volvo B7R for Castleways of Winchcombe. It is the company's first-ever Sideral and is its first B7R for three years. **VOLVO**



**Above:** RX06 XFE, one of the unique pair of East Lancs-bodied Dennis Enviro300s that Courtney Coaches is operating on its Chineham Park shuttle contract in Basingstoke. Bracknell-based Courtney also operates standard Alexander Dennis Enviro300s in its schoolbus fleet. **BOB BELCHER**

ex-Go North East B25F Optare MetroRider P425 VRG and Dennis Dart SLF/Plaxton Pointers DP22-7 (KP51 SYC/D, KX51 UDG, X601/2 AHE, X214 ONH). DP22-4/7 are from Dawsonrentals; 22/3 are B29F, 24 is B37F and 27 is B36F, while DP25/6 are ex-RDH Services and are B39F.

**Courtesy, Chadderton, Gtr Manchester**

Scania N113DRB/East Lancs H48/33F YCZ 4814 (L350 MRR) has been acquired from Red Arrow, Huddersfield, following Volvo B12M/Plaxton C49Ft Y688 UOL from the same source.

**Courtney, Bracknell**

The two East Lancs-bodied Dennis Enviro300s — the first with bodywork other than Alexander Dennis's — have been registered RX06 XFD/E. They are branded

for the shuttle service between Chineham Business Park and Basingstoke railway station and replace ex-Metrobus East Lancs-bodied Volvo Olympians on this work. Like the recent Scania OmniTown and Dennis Darts for Metrobus and Thames Travel, they have Millennium bodies with Esteem-influenced front ends.

Further to the May issue, K155 EJB was not sold but placed with a dealer on sale or return. It failed to find a buyer and returned to Courtney in June. Further to the July issue, Y831 HHE passed to Intransit, St Peter Port, Guernsey and Y832 HHE to Brierley & Barvela, Dagenham.

**CT Plus**

More Metro-owned BMC Condor 220/B57F yellow schoolbuses at Wakefield are BC007-11/3/6 (YK06 AVM/RT, DRX/U/V, AVL).

**Below:** As reported in our February issue, BX55 FYF is one of two low-floor Mercedes-Benz Sprinter 25s with Compass Royston of Stockton-on-Tees. **ROY MARSHALL**







**Above:** East Yorkshire 497 (YX06 HVK) is the second of its six Plaxton Primo midibuses bought to replace Mercedes-Benz Varios on Bridlington town services. **DAVID LONGBOTTOM**

#### Cumbria Classic, Ravenstonedale

Mulliner-bodied Guy Warrior 647 BKL has been sold to Cornwall, Sheffield Park.

#### Cumfybus, Southport

New Renault Master/M15 MX06 FMO, FNE have replaced Talbot Freeway J179 MNX and Renault Trafic L128 DDV.

Optare Solo MX06 ABK has been re-registered EH06 UNY for the Edge Hill College contract. Solo MX55 WDF, repaired after an arson attack, also works on this contract. Withdrawn are Leyland Olympian E218 WBG, Volvo B6 L238 CCW and Volvo B10M UJI 4522.

#### Drake, Blaia, Blaenau Gwent

Mercedes-Benz 709D/Plaxton Beaver N377 JGS has been acquired ex-Arriva the Shires & Essex, but Optare Solo GU52 HHE has been withdrawn after engine failure.

#### Dreadnought, Alnwick

Convertible open-top Bristol VRT/SL3/ECW 6 (UWV 620S) has been sold to Sjoerds Autos, Hilversum, Netherlands. Former Blackburn Leyland Titan/H42/26D KYN 306X is the new No.6.

#### Dunn-Line, Nottingham VE

The first five Volvo B12B/Caetano Levante for this operator are FJ06 FKZ, FLB/E-G, for service 767 (Nottingham-Stansted); new Caetano Enigmas 0602-5 (FJ06 GHAB/D/F) stood in until the wheelchair-accessible Levantes were available and are to be transferred to Durham. B12Bs 5512-5 are registered FJ55 XBA-D.

New Optare Solos for contracts with PTEs include M990 YJ06 YPT in South Yorkshire and short SlimLines YJ06 YPR, YRM/N for Nexus work in Tyne & Wear.

Former Metroliner Volvo Olympian/Alexander RH-type P474/7/86/92 MBY have been acquired via Ensign (dealer), Purfleet.

Scania/Irizar FE02 LZR (02 D 81212) has returned to Bus Éireann.

#### Eastbourne Buses

The Optare MetroRider for the Mark Cross-Rotherfield shuttle is MR17/B25F P420 VRG, on loan from Ensign, Purfleet (dealer), in Go North East red/blue livery. Ex-De Courcy, Coventry Dennis Dart/Marshall 33 (S45 BVC) has emerged in allover dark blue with crimson skirt and has been fitted with LED destination displays.

#### East Yorkshire EY

The rest of the Plaxton Primo/B28F at Bridlington are 498-501 (YX06 HVL-O). They were formally launched on 18 July. On loan from Transdev Lancashire United is former Sovereign Volvo B10M/Plaxton Paragon C53F 111 (KE51 WUP).

Mercedes-Benz Varios 449-51 (R449-51 PRH) have been transferred to Whittle. The transfer of Volvo B10M



**Above:** Ensignbus is operating four route-branded Optare Delta-bodied DAF SB220s on its X80 route that connects the Lakeside and Bluewater shopping complexes either side of the Dartford River Crossing. 640 (G740 RTY) was acquired recently from Go North East. **RUSSELL YOUNG**

coach 146 (E52 WAG) to Whittle has also been made permanent. Leyland Olympian/ECW 539 (A239 GHN) has been sold.

#### EasyBus

Delivery of up to 50 mini or midibuses could begin next January for an extension of services to London and regional airports. Currently, Arriva the Shires & Essex operates 10 Mercedes-Benz Sprinters on behalf of easyBus between London and Luton Airport.

#### Edwards, Llantwit Fardre

LAG Panoramic coach PJ1 8994 (B732 TEL) has been acquired from Streets, Chivenor. Toyota Coaster/Caetano Optimo M720 LTG has been reinstated. Ex-Cardiff Volvo Ailsa B55-10 MkIII/Northern Counties RKG 420/2Y have been withdrawn, but A430 VNY remains in service.

#### Ensignbus, Purfleet EB

The X80 (Chafford Hundred-Lakeside-Bluewater) is now operated by DAF SB220/Optare Deltas, former Reading Buses 605/6 (G505/6 XBL) and former Go North East 638/40 (G738/50 RTY). Dennis Dart 705 (P505 MOT) has been damaged in an accident and Centra Dart W141 WGT, one of those stored by Ensign, is on loan.

#### Epsom Coaches

Eleven new East Lancs-bodied Dennis Enviro200 Darts have been ordered, nine 9.3m and two 8.9m.

#### Finglands, Rusholme EY

Six new Alexander Dennis Enviro300s are due here.

The first was delivered unregistered in mid-July to East Yorkshire's Anlaby Road premises in Hull. The Dennis Tridents transferred from East Yorkshire have been numbered 1759/60 (X585/4 XKH).

#### First Bristol FG

As expected, the rest of the Alexander Dennis Pointer Dart B37F are Rail-Link-liveried 42949-51/5-9 (WX06 OMF-H/M/O/P/R/S) and standard-liveried 42967/8 (WX06 ONB/C).

Dennis Dart/Plaxton Pointers 40079 (J912 SHE) and 41652 (R652 TLM) have been withdrawn, as have Marshall-bodied Dart SLFs 41188/9/91/3-8 (R188/9 TLM, R191/3-6 VLD, S197/8 KLM), which are understood to be moving to First Cymru. Volvo B6BLEs 48226-9/31-4 (W826 PFB etc) are being transferred to First Devon & Cornwall.

#### First Coaches FG

New in May were Scania K114EB/Irizar C49Ft, while Scania K114IB/Irizar Century C49F 23019-21 (YN54 APX/K/P) have been transferred here from the rail replacement unit in Manchester for new services at Bristol Airport.

Also transferred here are Leyland Olympian ONCL10/1RZ/Northern Counties H47/29F 30230 (G177 JYG) from First Manchester and Dennis Dart SLF/Marshall B33F 41190 (R190 TLM) from First London.

#### First Cymru FG

Two Scania K340EB/Caetano Levante coaches are due in November.

*continued overleaf...*

#### GROUP CODES

##### AA

Arriva  
Passenger  
Services

##### DG

Comfort  
Delgro

##### EB

Ensignbus

##### EY

EYMS  
Group

##### FG

FirstGroup

##### GA

Go-Ahead  
Group

##### NX

National  
Express  
Group

##### ST

Stagecoach  
Group

##### TD

Transdev

##### TGM

Tellings -  
Golden  
Miller

##### VE

Veolia

##### WG

Wellglade  
Group



Scania L94UB/Wright Solar 65751 (SN55 JVC) was borrowed from First Edinburgh in June and operated on service X1 (Swansea-Bridgend) while Volvo B7R/Plaxton Profile 20371 (CV55 AMX) was evaluated in Scotland.

Dennis Javelin/Plaxton Expressliner 21153 (T103 XDE) has gone to First Aberdeen, while similar 21150 (S116 RKG) and Volvo B10M-62 20428 (T948 UEU) have gone into reserve. However, Mercedes-Benz 709D 51228 (M228 VWU) is back in service.

### First Devon & Cornwall FG

Due from First Bristol are Volvo B6BLE/Wright Crusader 2 B36F 48226-9/31-4 (W826-9/31-4 PFB). Leyland Olympian/Roe CO47/29F 34710, 39914 (A810/4 THW), 34710 at least still in Badgerline livery, have been transferred from First Somerset & Avon.

Bristol VRT 38873 (LFJ 873W) was repainted in the latest Barbie style in time for the Plymouth Hoe rally in July. It is believed to be the first painted in this style.

Vehicles sold are Volvo B10M/Plaxton Expressliner 20043 (G324 PEW, 920 GTA), B10M/Plaxton Premiere 20071/3 (J701/3 CWT), Dennis Javelin/Plaxton Expressliner 21091 (M291 FAE), Bristol VRT 38688 (URF 668S), Dennis Dart/Wright Handybus 45468 (NDZ 3168) and Dennis Dart SLF/Marshall 47108 (P408 MLA). Munden (dealer), Bristol has taken VRTs 38701 (AFJ 701T) and 38846 (LFJ 846W), Mercedes-Benz 811D/Plaxton Beaver 50832 (K332 OAF) and Mercedes 709D/Plaxton Beaver 51719 (N719 GRV).

### First Eastern Counties FG

Volvo B7TL/TransBus ALX400 32494 (AU53 HKM) struck a low bridge in Ipswich on 28 May. Scania L113CRL/Wright Access-ultralow 65552 (R552 CNG) is back in service after it was stolen last November.

Leyland Olympians 34937/49/53 (G47/9, 53 XLO), 34529 (NTC 129Y) have been withdrawn.

### First Essex FG

Following the use of a demonstrator here, two Plaxton Primo midibuses are to be delivered to Harwich for evaluation alongside Optare Solos.

The new 12m Scania OmniCity single-deckers for Chelmsford park-&-ride arrived in July and include 65029/31/2 (YN06 TDU/X/Z), of which 65031 is named *Strutt*. They wear the same black livery as the Wright-bodied Scania L94UBs they replace and have leather seats and air conditioning.

The only remaining outstation here is Dunmow; its allocation is usually one Leyland Olympian, 34816 (C416 HJN). Chelmsford-based Olympians 34818 (C418 HJN) is reported out of service with engine failure and its future is uncertain. 34807/15/6 (C407/15/6 HJN) are the only ECW-bodied Olympians remaining.

Alexander-bodied Leyland Olympians 31376/7 (L164/5 UNS) have been repainted into Barbie livery with black radiator grilles, rather than the entirely black front panels.



**Above:** Thought to be the only ECW-bodied Bristol VRT painted in First's current Barbie livery, 38873 (LFJ 873W) in the Devon & Cornwall fleet was refurbished in time for the Plymouth Hoe rally in July. **JONATHAN GULLIVER**

Dennis Darts 46119/25/6 (K919 CVW, M925/6 TEV) and Leyland Lynx 62524 (F424 MJN) have been sold, 46119 passing to Erith Commercials (dealer) for component recovery before scrapping.

### First Hampshire & Dorset FG

First Glasgow Dennis Dart SLF/Plaxton Pointer 2 B37F 40784-8/90-5 (R288-92/4-9 GH5) were finally transferred here in June.

Two buses damaged by electrical fires were Volvo Olympian/Northern Counties 31836 (R336 LGH), which suffered top deck damage in March, and Dart/Pointer 2 42142 (S642 XCR), which caught fire in Gosport on service 85.

This summer, Weymouth has been using convertible open-top ECW-bodied Bristol VRT/SL3s 39934/42 (VDV 134/42S) and permanent open-top 39971 (MOD 571P). Ex-Stephenson's of Essex open-top 39940 (MBZ 7140) remained in store, its engine installed in 39971.

### First Leicester FG

Dennis Falcon/East Lancs EL2000 67617 (K617 SBC) has been withdrawn again, leaving Northern Counties Paladin-bodied 67623 (L623 XFP) as the last active Falcon here. Falcons 67611-6/8-22/4-6 (H611-6 EJF,

K618-22 SBC, L624-6 XFP) remain in store, along with Volvo B10L/Alexander Ultras 60357/6 (N303/6 WNF) and 61242 (N31 RRP), Volvo B6s 48005/21/80/2 (L105 PWR, L601 MWC, L680 RMD, L888 JTC) and Mercedes-Benz minibuses 51266/7/9/70/6 (N266 JUG etc), 51631/6/90 (N521/6 REW, N590 WND) 90258 (E419 KUY) and un-numbered E425 KUY. 51788 has been used to distribute *Metro* newspapers in place of 90258.

After some time stored unused, Leyland Lynxes 62704/15/8/21/30-2/43 (G104 HNP etc) have gone for scrap. The two fire-damaged, un-registered BMC 1100FE schoolbuses have gone for repair.

Dennis Dominator 39167 (G667 FKA) continues in use as a driver trainer, while 26-year-old Dominator driver trainer 90257 (FUT 240V), out of use after its MoT expired, has become a mechanical trainer for incoming Polish fitters.

Heritage all-Leyland Titan PD2 154 (FJF 193), officially 90252, has not been used since its MoT expired last October.

### First London FG

Dennis Dart SLF/Marshall 41190 (R190 TLM) has gone to First Coaches.

**Below:** First Essex Scania OmniCity 65031 (YN06 TDX) shortly after entering service in July on the Cheltenham park-&-ride service. **LEE WHITEHEAD**







### First Manchester FG

Deliveries of new Volvo B7RLE/Wright Eclipse Urban B43F continue with 69152/4/7/65-72/4/5, (MX06 VOF/H, VNN, VMW/Z, VNB-F, VRC, VNK, VPO), 69195-7/9 (MX06 VPR/T/U/W), 69200-9 (MX06 VPY/Z, VRC, VPC-G/J/K) recorded.

Scania N113DRB/East Lancs 30255/8 (H813/6 WKH), Volvo Citybus/Alexander 30357/61/6/7 (G280/4/9/6 OGE) and Dennis Dart/Northern Counties 40183/4/8-90 (M608/9/13/7/8 SBA), 40248/52-4/63 (M104 RRJ, N620-2/31 CDB) have been withdrawn.

Leyland Olympian/Northern Counties 30230 (G177 JYG) has gone to First Coaches.

### First Northampton FG

Back from First Leicester is Volvo B7RLE 66968 (KX05 MJO). When these vehicles were delivered in 2005, First Northampton issued a leaflet boasting that the intake of 19 new buses showed commitment to Northampton; one year later, just eight remain in Northampton — four B7TLs and four B7RLEs.

Volvo Citybus/East Lancs 38022 (D102 XNV) has been withdrawn, leaving apparently shabby Volvo B10M-55 66615 (J115 MRP) as the only bus remaining in 1997 Leicester/Northampton livery.

### First Potteries FG

Ten more Scania OmniCitys are due for service 101 (Hanley-Stafford), with Scanias on this service then due to be cascaded to services 32/A (Hanley-Cheadle/Uttuxeter). Some Wright-bodied Scanias are due from First Manchester.

Rock Ferry-based DAF SB220/Optare Delta 60048 (H806 GRE) and Scania L94UB/Wright Axxess Fioline 60161 (S108 TNB) have been restricted to schools contracts.

Former Crosville Leyland Olympian/ECW 30072 (B181 BLG) was repainted immaculately in Barbie livery in time for the Crosville centenary weekend in May.

Scania N113DRB 31086 (H809 TWX) has been withdrawn with engine failure.

### First Somerset & Avon FG

Convertible Leyland Olympian/Roe 34710, 39914 (A810/4 THW), have gone to First Devon & Cornwall, while 10103 (V603 GGB) is another Volvo B10LA/Wright Fusion AB55D sent to First Glasgow.

Mercedes-Benz 709Ds 51596/7/9 (N896, 987, 899 HWS) have been withdrawn. Volvo B10M/Plaxton Expressliner 2 20445 (TDZ 3265) and Volvo B10M/Alexander P-type 66513 (D113 GHY) have been sold to Munden (dealer), Bristol.

Bath & East Somerset Council-owned Optare Solos 53038/9 (Y38/9 HBT) passed to Eurotaxi, Westerleigh along with the contract for Chew Valley Explorer services 672/674 (Bristol-Cheddar).

**Right:** Seven of the latest Wright Eclipse Gemini-bodied Volvo B7TLs for First West Yorkshire, including 37056 (YJ06 XMG), are in this incomplete non-standard livery for service X6 (Leeds-Bradford-Huddersfield). Route branding will probably go on the plain white upper deck and staircase panels. **DANIEL STAZICKER**

### First South Yorkshire FG

Another new Volvo B7TL/Wright Eclipse Gemini H45/29F here is 37155 (YN06 URJ).

The last Volvo B7TL/Alexander ALX400 H49/29F to arrive from First West Yorkshire were 30877-80 (W732-5 DWX), prepared for service at Rotherham.

PVS, Carlton (dealer) has taken Dennis Dominators 30496/7, 30504 (C887/9 JWE, D476 OWE), while Mercedes-Benz Varios 50194/5/8-200 (R127/8/31-3 XDT) went to Erith Commercials (dealer).

### First West Yorkshire FG

The first two of the Volvo B7LA/Wright StreetCar B42D to upgrade Leeds route 4 to 'ftr' bus rapid transit standard are due imminently, although the conversion won't happen before the autumn. One of them, registered YJ06 XLR and painted in the same pink and purple livery as the York fleet, attended the Worshipful Company of Carmen's annual cart marking ceremony in the City of London on 12 July.

New Volvo B7TL/Wright Eclipse Gemini H45/29F 37051-62 are registered YJ06 XMB-H/K-M/O/P and allocated to Bradford. Seven, including 37056-8/61, are in a non-standard livery for service X6 (Leeds-Bradford-Huddersfield).

Further Metro-owned BMC 220 Condor/B57F schoolbuses are 68632/3/8/9 (YK06 DNU/O/N, DTZ). 68632/3 are for Huddersfield, ousting 60953 (M415 VVW), the lone yellow Dennis Lance at Huddersfield, now in driver trainer livery to replace scrapped Leyland Lynx 62531 (E201 BOD). 68638 is at Halifax, 68639/43-7 at Bradford.

Leyland Olympians 30630 (B123 RWY), 30765/72 (C507 KBT, D516 HUB) are withdrawn. 30765 has gone to a private buyer, understood for preservation. Disposals are of Mercedes-Benz 709Ds 50244/7/8 (M210/9/20 VWU) to Erith Commercials, and Olympians 30526/8/43/99 (A105/16 KUM, B140 RWY, CUB 34Y), 30600/3/5/17/28/82/94 (CUB 35, 52/4Y, A99, 119 KUM, A601 NYG, G609 OWR), 30763/6/7 (B145 RWY, C508/9 KBT), Mercedes 50183 (N116 DWE), 50244 (M210 VWU) to PVS, Carlton (dealer) for scrap.



**Left:** New to Southampton Citybus in 1987, East Lancs-bodied Leyland Olympian 34989 (E289 HRV) now operates in the isolated Dorset part of the First Hampshire & Dorset fleet. Here, it covers a school journey on service 93 (Abbotsbury-Weymouth). **STEVE RICE**

### First York FG

An additional Volvo B7LA/Wright StreetCar AB42D is being delivered to replace prototype YK06 CZN, unofficially numbered 19000, which has departed and is to be upgraded to the same standard as the production vehicles.

### Fishwick, Leyland

Van Hool EOS 180Z W224 CDN has been sold to Butler, Loughborough. Fishwick features in *Buses Focus* 43, which looks at long-established independents and is on sale now, price £3.95.

### Focus, Much Hoole, Lancs

New Mercedes-Benz Vario O814D/Plaxton Cheetah C29F YN06 PFA is at work.

Former Travel Dundee Volvo Citybus B10M-50/Alexander H47/37F YCZ 4809/10 (G93/8 PES) have come from Courtesy, Chadderton, while similar DPH47/37F H115 ABV (new to Burnley & Pendle), Leyland Olympian ONLXB/1RZ/East Lancs H45/29F G918 LHA and Olympian ONCL10/1RZ/Northern Counties H47/30F F251 YTJ are ex-Arriva North West.

Volvo B12B FJ04 ETX has been re-registered YIL 1720 and Volvo Citybus G154 TYT has become VIL 4027. Leyland Olympian VIL 4027 has reverted to its original E923 KYR, while similar E921/7 KYR have gone to Shamrock, Poole. Mercedes-Benz O815/Sitcar YIL 1720 (Y651 XAO) has been sold to Gerry, Plymouth.

### Galloway, Mendlesham

Ipswich Buses' last Leyland B21/Alexander N-type B53F, WO1 607 (B117 LDX), has joined similar B115 LDX here.

### Geldard, Leeds

Metro-owned BMC 1100FE/B55F schoolbuses 201/4 (YK05 BAV, BBF) and YK05 BAO are in service.

Both former Metroliner Volvo Olympian/Alexander RH-types, P476/8 MBY, have been rebuilt to H43/29F without a centre door; 476 is in dark blue coach livery, 478 an overall advertisement for Blue Rinse Vintage Clothing. Alexander Royale H45/29F-bodied Olympians M85/7 MYM have come from Talisman, Great Bromley.

Another acquisition is DAF SB3000WS/Van Hool Alizée C53F R178 GNW from Arriva Midlands

### Godson, Cross Gates, Leeds

Metro-owned yellow BMC 1100FE/B55F schoolbuses YK05 BAA/U, BBE are at work.

### Go North East GA

Optare Tempo demonstrator YJ55 BLX returned in July and was numbered 9177. MAN 18.220/Marcopolo Viale B42F demonstrator PL05 TCO has been on loan to Wear Buses at Deptford, temporary numbered 9178 for its stay, where it chiefly worked long service 638 (Sunderland-Crawcrook). Also on loan to Go Northern, from Oxford Bus Company, has been Volvo B10B/Plaxton Verde B51F N603 FJO, numbered 9603.

*continued overleaf...*



Dennis Dart SLF/Plaxton Pointer B39F 8290-2 (S726 KNV, S783 RNE, T438 EBD, 99 D 81371, 68554, 80529) came from Supertravel, Speke and are based at Stanley.

Although still available for normal service, Percy Main-based Pointer Dart SLF 8201 (V201 ERG) has been adapted for use as a short-distance recovery vehicle — the first Dart in the country so equipped. Optare MetroRiders 416/7 (P416/7 VRG) have become non-psv crew ferries.

Withdrawn are Dennis Dart/Plaxton Pointers 8090-2 (M890-2 GBB) and 8110-2 (M810-2 HCU).

MetroRiders 413/8 (N413 LTN, P418 VRG) have been sold to Alrite Travel, South Bank and ECW-bodied Leyland Olympians 3672/3 (C672/3 LJR) have maintained the longstanding Leyland tradition with Weardale Motor Services.

The long-term closure of the famous High Level Bridge has been extended to as late as 2010.

### Gray, Ely, Cambs

G15 ELY, a 10m Dennis Javelin/Plaxton Profile C41F, has replaced G16 ELY, a 1999 model 10m Javelin with Plaxton Premiere 320 body.

### Holmeswood, Rufford, Lancs

More new purchases are MAN 18.360/Marcopolo Viaggio C55Ft PN06 TVJ, C53Ft PN06 TVK/LZ, Iveco EuroRider C31/Marcopolo Viaggio C70FL PN06 KSP, C70F PN06 TWA and C57FL PN06 TVT, Iveco Daily 65C17/Indcar Wing C22F PN06 TVF and MAN 14.280/Beulas Cygnus C35F PN06 UBK.

### Honister Slate Mine, Borrowdale

To take visitors from the entrance up to the entrance of the mine, 1,100ft above sea level at the top of the Honister Pass, former Stagecoach Cambus Volvo B6/Marshall VIL 3917 (L662 MFL) has been acquired. As the service operates off public roads, it is not psv licensed.

### Hornsby, Ashby, Lincs

New are Plaxton Primo/B28F FX06 JVF/G, branded for service 22 (Scunthorpe-Timberlands via Brumby and Ashby).

### Horseman, Reading

This 33-year-old operator has placed its largest ever order, for 20 Volvo B12B/Plaxton Panther coaches with a variety of seating layouts. Due for imminent sale are Volvo B10M-62/Berkhof T10, 20 DMB, B10M-62/Plaxton Excalibur M659 SBL, N660-2 VJB and Toyota Coaster/Caetano Optimos N669/70/2/3 VJB.

### Hulley, Baslow

Volvo B7R/Plaxton Profile C53F MX04 AAE has been acquired from Swan, Chadderton, replacing Dennis Javelin/Caetano Algarve 8 (H179 EJF), sold to Scania Coach Sales, Worksop.

### Huyton Travel, Liverpool

Another B29F Alexander Dennis Mini Pointer Dart is 60 (SN06 BLX). Also new are Optare Solos 61/3 (MX06 BSZ, BPV), while 8.5m Solo 62 (V980 XUB) is an acquisition.



**Above:** Having bought several Wright-bodied VDL SB120s and SB200s, K-Line now has 16 (YE06 HRX), the first Plaxton Centro-bodied SB120 in Yorkshire. **DAVID LONGBOTTOM**

Former Travel West Midlands Mercedes-Benz Vario/Alexander ALX100 R250 XDA has been numbered 53. A further acquisition is Dennis Dart/Plaxton L354 PFP from Metrobus.

### Ipswich Buses

The last Leyland B21, 147 (WO1 607, B117 LDX) was withdrawn on the last day of the school term, 21 July and sold to Galloway, Mendlesham, which already has 145.

### Johnson, Hodthorpe, Notts

The Mercedes-Benz Vario/Plaxton Cheetah C33F, YN06 OPG, has arrived.

### Llew Jones, Llanrwst

Mercedes-Benz Vario O814D/Plaxton Beaver B31F R939 AMB and S310 DLG have been acquired from Express Motors, Penygroes.

### JP Travel, Middleton

Ex-Blue Bus B30F Optare MetroRider P310 CXW has been acquired from Arriva North West. Dennis Dart SLF/Plaxton T455/7, 551/2 HNH have been sold to D&G, Addeley Green.

### Kimes, Folkingham, Lincs

An acquisition is Optare Excel B45F V394 KVV, ex-Claribels, Birmingham.

### K-Line, Honley

The first Plaxton Centro for a Yorkshire fleet is VDL SB120 16 (YE06 HRX). Two more new Metro-owned BMC Condor 220/B57F school vehicles are 32/3 (YK06 EFR/S). Yorkshire Traction BMC 1100FE schoolbus YN06 OKW has been on loan, covering for defective 31 (YK55 JNC).

The last Leyland Tiger, B112 GRR, has been sold to Paul's, Huddersfield.

### Kirby, Rayleigh, Essex

Having imported the first-ever Setra into the UK back in 1972, the love affair with this marque continues 34 years later, with new Setra S415 K9 BYS.

### Lianne, Slough

Further to the June issue, Bedford YRQ/Plaxton KDT 281P only stayed a few weeks and was sold to X Line, Exmouth. The two Mercedes O815D/Sitcar Belugas reported in *Buses* July under Silvergray, Rye, SF04 ZLV, ZNL, are now here.

### London Central/London General GA

An unusual delivery here on long-term loan from Volvo is Wright Eclipse Gemini-bodied B9 (BX06 BTF), the first Volvo B9TL — the new Euro4 replacement for the B7TL. It is in London General livery and looks identical to the WVL class.

More new Euro4 double-deckers are Alexander Dennis Enviro400/H41/26D E16-39 (LX06 EZL-P/R-T, EYY/Z, EZA-H, ECT/V, FKL-O).

Dennis Dart SLF LDP35 (P735 RYL) has returned from use as a mobile classroom with Southern Railway.

### M&H Coaches, Denbigh

Optare Solo SlimLine MK06 BSO is new.

### Maghull Coaches, Bootle

Dennis Trident/East Lancs H45/24D V412-4 KMY, surprise acquisitions from Metrobus of Orpington, are in service.

### Magpie, High Wycombe

Acquisitions are Dennis Dart/Wright J630 KCU, and an unusual Mercedes-Benz schoolbus, AE51 VKH.

### Meteor Parking GA

New Optare Solo M850/B19F at Heathrow Airport are 6-11 (YJ06 FYA-F).

### Metrobus GA

Volvo Olympian/East Lancs Pyoneer 843-5 (R843-5 MFR) have been reinstated at Crawley. Optare Solos 194-6 (Y294-6 PDN) have returned to the Tellings-Golden Miller Group. More Dennis Tridents sold are 401/4-8/10-4/6; 411, not 414, went to Carousel, LOTS reports. 412-4 are with Maghull Coaches. Leyland Olympian 805 (G805 SMV), Volvo Olympians 888-90

## THE COACH PARC

JAMES PRINCE profiles the Plaxton 321, a Scarborough product with a distinct Blackpool pedigree

When it was launched in 1985, the Duple 320 turned out to be the Blackpool manufacturer's last low-floor coach. It proved particularly popular on the then new Dennis Javelin chassis, produced by its chassis-building sister company in the Hestair group. However, the axe fell on Duple in 1989 and the rights to most of its body designs were sold to arch-rival Plaxton.

Having bought the body jigs for the 320, Plaxton seized an opportunity to body a batch of Leyland Tiger chassis with a Scarborough-built version of the body, badged as the Plaxton 321.

It was launched at the end of 1990 in conjunction with Yeates, the Loughborough-based dealer, and was aimed at operators looking for a cost effective new coach. By now owned by Volvo, Yeates had recently relinquished its Dennis franchise and the availability of a Tiger with a body similar to many of those fitted to the Javelin seemed an ideal solution. By then, Leyland was also in Volvo ownership. The package was priced competitively with a choice of interior trim and the standard Tiger driveline of Cummins L10 engine and ZF gearbox. A choice of

250hp or 290hp power options was available.

Although it looked just like a 320, the body had been reworked and fitted with Paramount seats, luggage racks and forced air system. On the outside, standard Plaxton marker lights, side trim, locker door handles and roof-mounted air intakes showed that this was not a Blackpool product.

Yeates ordered 25. But that was it. The early 1990s were difficult times for the coach industry and the 321 did not catch on. A few operators took single examples, including Stanley Gath and Dunn-Line, but it was Bebb of Llantwit Fardre that saved Yeates from having a load of unwanted coaches in its yard. Ten entered that fleet in August 1991 and the last five were snapped up in early 1992, almost two years after they were built. Since then, almost every example has changed hands and some have been exported to Malta.



**Above:** Then independently owned Metrobus of Orpington bought the first Plaxton 321-bodied Leyland Tiger in October 1990. J202 FMX is one of a second pair bought a year later for the associated Southlands fleet. **JAMES PRINCE**



(WLT 838, M409/10 RVU) and Dennis Darts 724/5/30/51/6/9/60 (M724/5 CGO, K488 XPG, M151 HPL, L726 DPG, N259/60 PJR) have been sold to Ventura (dealer).

### **Metroline DG**

First's Dennis Tridents 32958/64 were returned off-loan at the end of May, leaving 32959/60 as the last remaining on loan here. The recent livery with lighter blue skirt, introduced earlier this year, is being abandoned and the previous darker blue is reinstated.

### **NIBS, Wickford, Essex**

Former Transdev Yellow Buses Dennis Dominator/East Lancs H47/33F acquired via Ensign (dealer), Purfleet are H258/64 MFX, J266/9 SPR.

### **Northern Blue, Burnley**

The fleet is likely to expand to handle 17 school contracts won in the Blackburn area.

Leyland Olympian ONCL10/1RZ/Alexander H47/32F 196 (F96 PRE) has been acquired from Arriva North West and was new to Stevensons' of Uttroter, arriving with front upper deck accident damage. Also acquired is 139 (H239 LOM), a Scania N113DRB/Alexander H45/31F from Town & Country, Purfleet.

Volvo B10M/Caetano Algarve 310 (LIJ 749, F870 TNH) has been advertised for sale. Leyland National Greenways 15/9 (JIL 2165/59; JOX 516P, PUK 643F) have been sold to Business Buses, Kilwinning, following 2 and 17 (RJI 6862, PDZ 6277; MCA 677T, TPE 161S) sold in February this year.

Volvo B10M/East Lancs EL2000 3 (PIL 9173, NCS 117W) has been sold to Via Travel, Shavington for use on former Arriva service 781 (Winsford-Hanley). Toyota Coaster/Caetano Optimo 320 (M60 TGM) has also been sold. Leyland Olympian/Optare 155 (E155 OMD) returned to Kent with Kent County Council via Ensign, Purfleet (dealer). All-Leyland Olympian G305 UYK has been sold to Stephenson, Rochford (dealer).

### **North West Travel, Liverpool**

Former Reading Buses Optare MetroRider MR17/B25F R627 SJM has been acquired, via Ensign, Purfleet (dealer). All-Leyland Olympian G305 UYK has been sold to Stephenson, Rochford (dealer).

### **Nottingham City Transport**

Nine more 12m Scania N94UB/East Lancs OmniDekka H51/36F, 748-54 (YN06 TGF/J/K/O/U/V/X) are at work in a revised livery on Go2 pink route service 28. They have 2+1 seating downstairs. Also new are similar 669/70 (YN06 TGY/Z) as spare Go2 buses.

Euro4 Scania N230UB/East Lancs Esteem demonstrator YN06 TGE has been on loan at Newark. Optare Alero 902 (YN03 NCE) has arrived from Nottingham City Council and Alero demonstrator 906 (YJ06 FYG) has returned to Optare. Volvo Olympian/East Lancs 463 (S463 ATV) is in Network green spare livery, ex-Purple Line. Optare Solo 291 (S291 NRB) is reported cannibalised after severe accident damage.

**Below:** One of eight Mercedes-Benz Citaros delivered late last year to Plymouth Citybus, 81 (WJ55 HLH) was photographed in Plympton early this year. **MARK BAILEY**



**Above:** Nottingham City Transport has revised the Go2 high-frequency service livery on its latest East Lancs-bodied Scania OmniDekkas. As shown on 751 (YN06 TGO), the route colour now extends in Contravision over the frontmost top deck windows, and the Go2 logo has been changed. **BOB MCGILLIVRAY**

### **Oxford Bus Company GA**

Another 11 Mercedes-Benz Citaros have been ordered for delivery before the end of the year. They will have Euro5 (not Euro4) engines and are for Project 1, an enhancement of route 13 in advance of the opening of extensions to John Radcliffe Hospital. Oxford will then have 38 Citaros.

Volvo B10B/Plaxton Verde B51F 603 (N603 FJO) has gone on loan to Go North East.

### **Grant Palmer, Dunstable**

Ex-Arriva Fox Country Mercedes Vario/Plaxton B27F R134 LNR has been received in exchange for Volvo B10M/Duple 300 F339 VSD, splitting F338/9 VSD after 18 years together since they were new to Hutchison, Overtown. F338 VSD will be retained for school services on route 202 (Dunstable-Harpenden).

Leyland Olympian/Northern Counties B125 TVU is repainted in yellow schoolbus livery.

### **Patron Travel, Flintham, Notts**

Former Hong Kong tri-axle Leyland Olympian/Alexander DPH57/49F J629 CEV is at work here.

### **Paul's Travel, Huddersfield**

Leyland Tiger/Plaxton B112 GRR has been acquired from K-Line, Honley.

### **Peoples Bus, Netherton, Liverpool**

A second ex-Blackburn Transport Leyland Titan here is KYV 526X, rejoining KYV 517X.

### **Platinum Coaches, Preston**

The second double-decker into stock is Leyland Fleetline FE30AGR/Northern Counties EAD 122T, latterly with Embling, Guyhirn.

### **Plymouth Citybus**

Three of the new 10.7m Alexander Dennis Enviro200 Dart/B37F have been ordered.

### **Preston Bus**

The start date of 14 August for the Orbit route 14 was postponed to October, as road works on part of the route were not finished in time. It is confirmed that 17 Optare Solos are on order, a mixture of long and short wheelbase types, bringing the 2006 vehicle intake to 27.

Advertising frames are now being fitted to all double-deckers, including Atlanteans, and apparently the new Scania single-deckers will also have these.

The lone coach, Volvo B10M-62/Van Hool Alizée 323 (PRN 909), is to be disposed of, as Preston Bus is pulling out of the excursion business. It reverted to original registration T894 HBF.

### **Protours, Heswall**

New are Volvo B12B/Berkhof Axial FJ06 ZKN/O/U.

### **Rambler, Hastings**

The PSV Circle reports the delivery, in May, of new Volvo B12B/Berkhof C53Ft CR06 EDY.

### **Reading Transport**

The five Scania OmniCities, 1-5, for Goldline's enhanced contract for Thames Valley Park, have been delayed and will enter service a little later than shown last month.

DAF SB220/Optare Deltas 505/6 (G505/6 XBL) have joined Ensignbus's operational fleet, while 507 (G507 XBL) has gone to Ensign as dealer. 501/3/7/10 (G501/3/7/10 XBL) have been sold on to McKindless, Wishaw.

Optare MetroRider 632 (T556 ADN) and DAF SB3000/Van Hool coach 234 (J786 KHD) are allocated to the driving school, though 234 is still available for coaching work at weekends and other times when not required.

### **Reay, Wigton, Cumbria**

Scania K-series/Irizar YN06 NYC/D are further new coaches here.

### **Red Rose, Aylesbury**

Deroofed former Reading MCW Metrobus MkII B148 EDP has been cannibalised.

### **RH Transport, Oxford**

This operator won the contract for the Oxford Park-& Ride 600 (Thornhill-Churchill and Nuffield Orthopaedic Hospitals) from Stagecoach Oxford. Optare Solo SlimLine M850 MX55 WCY and new MX06 BPY/Z have been obtained for the contract, the last two replacing borrowed Solos MX53 FEH and MX04 VLM.

Mercedes-Benz Sprinter Y363 UOM is in maroon/cream Cotswold Line Railbus livery.

### **Roberts, Hugglescote, Leics**

Former Arriva Midlands Leyland Olympians A134 SMA and B514 LFP have been acquired for the Discover Leicester Tour, joining ex-Plymouth Leyland Atlantean ATK 161W. Tours from mid-July to the end of August are organised by Leicester Shire Promotions and County Tours. Thanks to senior guide Derek Hollingworth for these notes.

#### **GROUP CODES**

##### **AA**

Arriva  
Passenger  
Services

##### **DG**

Comfort  
Delgro

##### **EB**

Ensignbus

##### **EY**

EYMS  
Group

##### **FG**

FirstGroup

##### **GA**

Go-Ahead  
Group

##### **NX**

National  
Express  
Group

##### **ST**

Stagecoach  
Group

##### **TD**

Transdev

##### **TGM**

Tellings -  
Golden  
Miller

##### **VE**

Veolia

##### **WG**

Wellglade  
Group



### Rossendale Transport

The Dennis Super Dart/Alexander ALX200 acquired from Munro, Jedburgh, X763-6 UKS, are not now to be used as schoolbuses. Instead they are being numbered 163-6 and are to be refurbished, fitted with wheelchair ramps and bays and Mobitec LED destinations and are to be painted in Mainline 464 livery. They will displace Super Pointer Darts 131-4 (X131-4 JCW) to other duties requiring their slightly larger capacity.

The ex-Halton Darts 10/2 (R410 XFL, R712 MEW) are now in yellow schools livery and have Mobitec LED front destinations. Marshall-bodied Darts 128/9 (K28/9 XBA) are withdrawn.

### Ryan, Bath

MCW Metrobus ANA 565Y has been sold to British Bus Sales, Cobham.

### SBC Leisure, Southend

This phoenix from the ashes of Supreme Travel revived open-top operations on Southend seafront on 27 July using the yellow East Lancs-bodied Scania OmniDekka — the former demonstrator run in closed top form by Lothian — which it ran briefly in London earlier this year. This new Seasider-branded service follows the traditional route between East Beach, Shoebury and Thames Drive, Leigh-on-Sea before extending west to Canvey Island. The farthest west any open-top service had run before was Hadleigh Church, around a mile beyond Thames Drive. Previously SN04 CPE, the Scania has been re-registered B16 YBC.

### Scarlet Band, West Cornforth, Co Durham

Ex-Trent Barton Mercedes-Benz 811D/Wright NimBus B31F M274 URC has been acquired.

### Semmence, Wymondham, Norfolk

A fire at the depot has destroyed several vehicles that were already out of service, Bedford YNT/Plaxton EUB 552Y, B512 JJR, OSU 314 (RPS 380Y), DAF SB2300/Duple D616 YCX and DAF SB2300/Plaxton BX1 3079 (B643 OFP).

### Shamrock, Pontypridd

New for Thomas of Barry are MAN-engined Neoplan Euroliner N316SHD/C49Ft YN06 FUB and Mercedes-Benz Vario 0815/Sitcar Beluga 2 C29F WA06 JFV/U. The recent Neoplan Skyliner reported as YN55 MAN is actually YN55 NMM.

Acquired is ex-Ministry of Defence Dennis Javelin/Wadham Stringer C54F M213 UNX.

Ex-Amber Lee DAF SB3000/Ikarus C53F P712-5 RWU are at Barry being uprated to C70F for schools work before entering service. Also at Barry are former Arriva Leyland Lynx 2s J363 AWX, J376 UWT.

Dennis Dart SLF/Plaxton R190 TKU has gone to Abercynon, where former Arriva North West Optare MetroRider P225 FRB has entered service in all over white.

Part-exchanged for new vehicles are Volvo B12B/Sunsundegui FJ04 ERY, Mercedes-Benz/Esker CN05 SVS and Mercedes 0815/Sitcar Beluga midcoach WA03 HBL.

**Below:** The new East Lancs Millennium Vyking-bodied Volvo B7TL for Southdown PSV, GX06 AOE, in Redhill bus station. **TIM CARTER**



**Above:** Shamrock, Poole 290 (E921 KYR) is one of two Northern Counties-bodied Leyland Olympians acquired from Focus, Much Hoole. They form part of a batch of 28 originally intended for Greater Manchester Buses, but supplied to London Buses for its short-lived Bexleybus operation. **BEN MORROLL**

Scania/Irizar YN51 MKE has passed to Vision Travel, Waterloooville. Mercedes Vario/Plaxton Beaver 2s T158/9 PNY are further examples sold to Stafford Bus Centre. Also sold are former Arriva Leaseide Plaxton-bodied DAFs P753 RWU and T56 AUA and Ikarus-bodied DAF P754 RWU.

Leyland Olympians JTY 382, 400X and D177, 202 FYM all passed to Abba Scrap Metals, Dowlais.

### Shamrock, Poole

Leyland Olympian ONLXB/1RH/Northern Counties H43/30F 290/1 (E921/7 KYR) have been acquired from Focus, Much Hoole.

### Silver Star, Caernarfon

An impressive new vehicle is Setra S415HD CX06 AHJ. Also acquired is Mercedes-Benz OH1628L/Jonckheere Deauville C53F J213 DYL.

Leyland Leopard MNM 31V, Leyland Tiger JEY 554Y and Bedford YMT WCC 92V, all Plaxton-bodied, have been withdrawn. MAN 11.190/Optare Vecta RIL 3899 (J367 BNW) has been sold to Express Motors, Penygroes. Bristol LH6Ls MCA 613/5P and Leopard/Plaxton LIL 7547 (AEF 470A, NUR 91P) have been broken up at the depot.

### Solent Blue Line GA

ECW-bodied Leyland Olympian 700 (A700 DDL) has gone to the Isle of Wight Bus Museum. Similar 703 (A203 MEL) was sold for preservation, but has subsequently been noted, still in Asda livery, working

schools contracts in Southend, while 704 (A204 MEL) is with Qualit Conversions, Bishops Waltham. Iveco Daily 59.12s 229/53/5/60/4 (R928 GKX, N253/5 ECR, N260 FOR, L937 KSG) have been sold for scrap.

### Southdown PSV, Crawley Down

The first new double-decker here is Volvo B7TL/East Lancs Millennium Vyking H45/27F GX06 AOE, which entered service in white and has since been painted in fleet livery. Also acquired is DAF SB220/Optare Delta B49F S160 JUA (S222 AJW, S160 JUA), ex-Weavaway, Newbury.

Unused DAF DB250 T133 AUA has returned to Dawsonrentals. Leyland Lynxes G299, 300 KQY, J922/5 MKC have been withdrawn.

### Southern Vectis GA

Vehicles now named are Volvo B7TLs 100/1/3/4 (HW52 EPK/L/O/P) Chale Bay, Sandown Bay, Brightstone Bay, Brook Bay and Olympians 726/38/41/58 (TIL 6726, K738/41 ODL, R757 GDL) Freshwater Bay, Osborne Bay, Puckpool Point and Thorness Bay.

Reseated are Olympians 735-8/40/58 (K735-8/40 ODL, R758 GDL) to H48/29F, 720/6 (TIL 6720/6) to H45/31F and coach 575 (MIL 9575) to C55F.

Back in fleet livery, ex-Asda overall advertisements, are Volvo Olympians 760/1 (R741/39 XRV) and latest livery is also worn by Olympian 740 (K740 ODL).

All vehicles are now allocated to Ryde and Newport; the garages at Freshwater, Sandown and Ventnor having closed.

### South Lancs, Atherton

Former Beeston, Hadleigh Optare Solo M950/B33F YN53 YGY has been re-registered K60 SLT. Mercedes-Benz Varios R165/6 ESG have been sold respectively to Vales, Manchester, and Evans, Tregaron. Mercedes OH1416/Wright Urbanrangers L610 OWB, N31/2 EVT have also been withdrawn.

### South Yorkshire, Pontefract

An addition is ex-Stagecoach North West Volvo B6/Alexander Dash 208 (M462 VHE) Beverley.

### South Yorkshire PTE

The four Optare Aleros have been advertised for sale and are being stored by Sheffield Community Transport; they are YL51 ZTG latterly with Rotherham Community Transport for Rural RotherRide, YL51 ZTH latterly with Barnsley dial-a-ride and YU02 GPZ, GRF, latterly with Sheffield Community Transport.

### Speedwell, Glossop

This is another fleet to introduce fleetnumbers, viz: Mercedes-Benz minibuses 0001/2 (M115 XLV, N645 HSX);

Mercedes-Benz Varios 0003-11 (R944 AMB, T35/6 JBA, T445/6 WWT, V983/94 DNB, MX04 VMJ/K);



Optare Solos 1001-8 (MX53 FDG/Z, VLY/Z, MX04 VLZ, MX54 KYH, WMJ/K, MX05 OTM); Leyland Titan 2001 (OHV 808Y); MCW Metrobuses 2002-6 (QJD 828Y, A984 SYF, B192 WUL, B230 WUL, C330 BUV).

## Stagecoach Cambridgeshire ST

New for Cambridge are Optare Solos 32767/8 (AE06 TWN/V), 47352/3/5 (AE06 TWP/X/U).

Stagecoach Lincolnshire open-top MCW Metrobus Mk2 741 (WOI 3001) was borrowed for East of England Show shuttle services on 16-18 June as mechanical work on Bristol Lodekka FLF6G open-topper 19952 (JAH 552D) was not completed in time.

Leyland Olympians 14506-9/13 (F506 NJE etc) have gone for scrap, rather than for further service at Stagecoach Yorkshire.

## Stagecoach Devon ST

Alexander Dennis Trident/ALX400 H47/28F 18383/4 (MX55 KRZ, KSE) have been transferred from Stagecoach Manchester.

## Stagecoach East ST

New Optare Solos for Corby are 47338-41 (KX06 TYF-H/K). Leyland Olympian 14631 (C631 LFT) and Mercedes-Benz 709D 40137 (M337 LHP) have been sold to Ensign (dealer), Purfleet.

## Stagecoach East Midlands ST

Hull-based Alexander Dennis Tridents 18425-35 (YN06 LLU-X/Z, LME/F/J-M) carry new Frequento route branding.

Leyland Olympians 13170 (C170 YBA), 14324 (A324 AKU), 14665 (C665 LFT), 14901/8/9/12/8/22/5 (E901 KYR etc), Dennis Dominators 15077/9 (F77 TFU, G79 VFW) and Mercedes-Benz Varios 42356-8 (S356-8 KEF) are now officially withdrawn. Dominators 15047/8/51 (F147 BKH etc) have been sold to PVS, Carlton (dealer). Dennis Dart 32713 (K713 PCN) has gone to Stagecoach North East.

The AEC Routemasters stored at Chesterfield, 12286, 12303 (CUV 286, 303C), 12392/9, 12437/50/62/96 (JJD 392D etc), 12607 (NML 607E) and 12738 (SMK 738F) are now part of this fleet; they will not be included in the sale of Stagecoach London.

## Stagecoach Lincolnshire ST

The ex-London Dennis Dart SLF/Plaxton Pointers reported last month were received to B29D layout but are being converted to B32F, starting with 34188/9 (W188/9 DNO).

## Stagecoach London ST

Stagecoach has ordered 18 Alexander Dennis buses for Selkent, on behalf of new owner Macquarie Bank, which is due to take over Selkent and East London around September. They are the ten 10.8m Enviro400 H75D double-deckers reported in last month's News section (for route 61), plus eight 8.9m Enviro200 Darts to B26F layout.

As noted under the Stagecoach East Midlands and North West headings, AEC Routemasters RML2286, 2303/92/9, 2437/50/62/96, 2607/24/41/57/71, 2738 have been transferred to those fleets and are not included in the sale to Macquarie. Dennis Dart SLFs 34212-21 (W212-6/35/18/9/35/21 DNO) are all at Stagecoach Merseyside.

## Stagecoach Manchester ST

Alexander Dennis Enviro400/H47/33F 19002/4 (MX06 XAA/C) entered service at Stockport on 17 July, followed by 19005/7 (MX06 XAD/G), which were delivered on 19 July and were pushed into use on the Open Golf Park-&-Ride at Hoylake on 21 July. These are the first lowheight Enviro400s to be built. 19002/4 displaced Tridents 18383/4 (MX55 KRZ, KSE) to Stagecoach Devon; the Tridents cascaded have (inevitably) changed from those reported last month.

More Volvo B10M-55/Northern Counties Paladins in blue Magic Bus livery are 20674, 20893 (R674 HCD, P893 MNE). B10M training coach 52115 has been withdrawn.

## Stagecoach Merseyside ST

Dennis Dart/Plaxton Pointer 2 B30F 34220 (W235 DNO) has arrived from Stagecoach London, thus all of 34212-21 (W212-6/35/18/9/35/21 DNO) are here.

Such is the pace of fleet renewal that Volvo B10M-55s 20152/77/91/2/4/7 (R652 VSE, K577 LTS, M591/2/4/7 OSO) have gone to Stagecoach Glasgow, 20305 (L305 PSC) has moved to Stagecoach North West (to replace fire-damaged 20430, see below) and Volvo B10B/Wright Endurance 21012 (N659 EKD) has gone to



**Above:** Stagecoach East 33182 (VX51 RBZ) is one of four Alexander ALX200-bodied Dennis Dart SLFs supplied by Bedfordshire County Council for park-&-ride work in Bedford. They were operated previously by Bharat Travel of Southall on its now discontinued 805 route to Heathrow. **RUSSELL YOUNG**

Stagecoach Yorkshire. The only remaining step-entrance Darts are ex-CMT 32920-4 (N653-7 CHF) and Alexander Strider-bodied 21005 (M391 VVX) is the sole remaining B10B. 21003/7 (M388/93 VVX) are in store at Preston.

Leyland Lynx 29134 (F206 MBT) has been withdrawn from the training fleet, which now consists solely of Volvo B10M/Plaxton Interurbans 52210-2/57 (L640-3 LDT, M943 TSX).

## Stagecoach North East ST

Busways Dennis Dart/Alexander Dash B40F 32762 (L762 ARG) has been transferred to Transit at Hartlepool, while similar 32713/7 (K713/7 PCN) have also been transferred into Transit from Stagecoach East Midland and Busways respectively.

Dennis Dart 32563 (K563 NHC) and Mercedes-Benz 709Ds 40461/4/85 (N461/4/85 RVK) have been withdrawn.

## Stagecoach North West ST

The Kick-Start-funded Network Chorley town services started on 23 July with new Optare Solos 47326-37 (PX06 FXV/W/Y/Z, FYA-H).

Volvo B10M-55/Alexander B49F 20305 (L305 PSC) has been transferred from Stagecoach Merseyside to replace similar 20430 (M230 TBV), which has been withdrawn following fire damage.

Bristol VR 15731 (PHH 149W KRM 731W) is finally on the disposal list, as are ex-Ribble Leyland Tiger/Duple Dominant bus 25800 (B900 WRN) and Volvo B6s 30241, 30305 (L241 CCK, M745 PRS) but 30306/9 (M746/9 PRS) are reinstated at Lillyhall.

The AEC Routemasters stored at Carlisle, 12624/41/57/71 (NML 624/41/57E, SMK 671F), are not included in the sale of Stagecoach London and so are now part of this fleet.

## Stagecoach Oxfordshire ST

All Mercedes-Benz Varios at Oxford, 42376/83, 42586/8 (S376/83 DFC, T586/8 SKG) are withdrawn as a result of service revisions; all but 42383 are at Stagecoach West, which also has Volvo B10M-55/Alexander PS-type 20820 (P820 GNC). Chipping Norton depot has been redeveloped for housing, but three vehicles remain outstationed in the town.

## Stagecoach South East ST

A new Alexander Dennis Pointer Dart/B37F at Worthing is 35117 (GX06 AZG). The new Euro4-engined Alexander Dennis Enviro300/B45F for Winchester park-&-ride, 27511-5 (GX06 DZF-H/J/K), are painted two-tone green in Stagecoach corporate style.

## Stagecoach Wales ST

Nine Optare Solo M850/B27F, 47342-50, are being delivered for services 150/151 (Giffach Goch-Tonyrefail-Porth-Pontypridd), duly given Go2 Porth & Ponty route branding. Reported so far are 47342/3/5/6/9/50 (CN06 LDX/Y, LEF/J, LFB/D).

Mercedes-Benz 814D/Crest 42026 (T667 RET), Volvo B10M/Van Hool 52015 (M134 SKY), B10M/Plaxton 52153/4 (NIL 8646/57) and B9M/Plaxton 59801 (NIL 8647) have been sold to Stephenson, Rochford (dealer), while Dennis Darts 32986/9 (L86/9 CWO) went to Ensign (dealer), Purfleet.

## Stagecoach West ST

Another Volvo B10M-55/Alexander PS B49F acquired from Stagecoach Oxford for Cheltenham & Gloucester is 20820 (P820 GNC).

Also acquired from Stagecoach Oxford for Cheltenham & Gloucester are the first Mercedes-Benz Varios for Stagecoach West, Alexander ALX100 B29F-bodied 42376 (S376 DFC) and Plaxton B29F-bodied 42586/8 (T586/8 SKG). These are likely to replace ex-Stagecoach Yorkshire Optare MetroRiders at Coleford, and Cheltenham & Gloucester MetroRider 47962 (N210 VRC) has been placed in the reserve (licensed) fleet, while 47956 (N204 VRC) is withdrawn.

MAN 14.220/MCV Stirling 39610 (CU04 AMV) is the first ex-Dukes vehicle repainted into full Stagecoach livery. It has been fitted with electronic destination displays.

Leyland Olympian 14289 (LWS 37Y) briefly re-entered service before being relicensed again at the end of June. Withdrawn are Cheltenham & Gloucester Mercedes-Benz 709D/Alexander 40725 (N725 RDD) and Mercedes 811D/Marshall 41330 (L330 CHB), plus Swindon & District Leyland Olympian 14624 (C624 LFT). Roe-bodied Leyland Olympians sold for preservation are Cheltenham & Gloucester 14282 (JHU 899X) to Cheltenham & Gloucester Preservation Group, 14286 (LWS 34Y) to M. Minett, Stroud and Swindon & District 14283 (UWW 7X) to Dave Rogers, Swindon.

Night bus services began in Swindon for the first time on Fridays and Saturdays from 23 June, when existing night services in Cheltenham and Gloucester were enhanced.

## Stagecoach Yorkshire ST

The 10 new Alexander Dennis Pointer Darts for Sheffield service 88 (High Green-Bents Green) include 35107/9/11/2/4-6 (YN06 WCM/K, WMO, WNO, WCR/T/U) and YN06 WCG/L/P, which presumably are 35108/10/3, but not necessarily in that order.

*continued overleaf...*

**Below:** One of the 10 new Alexander Dennis Pointer Darts that Stagecoach Yorkshire has put on to Sheffield city route 88, 35114 (YN06 WCR). **LEE WHITEHEAD**



## GROUP CODES

### AA

Arriva  
Passenger  
Services

### DG

Comfort  
Delgro

### EB

Ensignbus

### EY

EYMS  
Group

### FG

FirstGroup

### GA

Go-Ahead  
Group

### NX

National  
Express  
Group

### ST

Stagecoach  
Group

### TD

Transdev

### TGM

Tellings -  
Golden  
Miller

### VE

Veolia

### WG

Wellglade  
Group



Another Volvo B10B/Wright Endurance B51F from Stagecoach Merseyside is 21012 (N659 EKD). The ex-Stagecoach Cambridgeshire Leyland Olympian/Northern Counties, 14506-9/13 (F506-9/13 NJE), went for scrap rather than being refurbished for service here.

Neoplan Skyliner Megabus.com double-deckers 50145/6/50 (YN05 WEC/F/K) have been transferred to Scotland, replaced by tri-axle Leyland Olympian/Alexander DPH53/41F 13630 (H493 LNA) from Stagecoach Wales, plus Volvo B10M-62/Plaxton Expressliner 2 C53F 52195 (LJY 145) and Berkhof Excellence 1000LD C51F-bodied 52029 (LSK 485) from Scotland.

PVS, Carlton (dealer) has removed Dennis Dart 32189 (J401 XHL) and all stored ex-Stagecoach Merseyside Volvo B6s and Darts.

### Stephenson, Rochford, Essex,

Heads were turned in Southend by the appearance of Uno's pink and purple Dennis Dart SLF/Wright 651 (R651 VBM) on rural service 14, hired following an accident involving Alexander Dennis Pointer Dart EU05 LZA.

Open-top former Ribble Leyland Olympian JFR 4W has gone to Bulgaria.

### Stones, Leigh

This operator is the first to receive the new Alexander Dennis Enviro200 Dart, with B37F BUS 51T.

### Sun Fun, Earith, Cambs

Leyland Lynxes F604 UVN, H816 EKJ and J380 BWU are here.

### Supertravel, Speke

Dennis Dart SLF/Plaxton T7 STM has been re-registered T102 KCC. Dennis Dart SLF/Plaxton Pointer KP51 SYA/C have gone to Countryliner, Guildford.

### Swans, Chadderton

As illustrated in News last month, National Express service 060 (Liverpool-Manchester-Leeds) has been won from First's Manchester-based coach operation, and the first two production Volvo B12B/Caetano Levante wheelchair accessible coaches, FN06 FLC/D are at work on it. Also new are Scania/Irizar Centurys YN06 NZE/F/G.

New B29F Alexander Dennis Mini Pointer Dart MX06 XFT is used on service 200; also new, similar MX06 ULP is dedicated to service 407 and carries a permanently fixed indicator display for it. It replaces borrowed TransBus Enviro300 MX55 NWK. Iveco Scolabus/Vehixel FN55 EDV is also in use.

Volvo B7R/Plaxton MX04 AAE was sold to Scania, Worsop (dealer), and has passed to Hulley, Baslow.

### Talisman, Great Bromley

Former Dublin Bus Leyland Olympian/Alexander (Belfast) H643, 859 PTW have been sold and Volvo Olympian/Alexander Royale M85/7 MYM have gone to Geldard, Leeds.

### Tellings-Golden Miller TGM

Two Scania K340EB/Berkhof Axial 50s are on order, while YN06 CJY is one of two new Scania K114EB/Irizar Century C53F.

### Terravision, Stansted Airport

Two more new coaches here are tri-axle Scania K114EB/Irizar Century C65FL YN06 NZC/D.

### Thamesdown Transport

Rather surprising acquisitions are the first Leyland Olympians for this operator, Alexander H45/30F-bodied G522/3 WJF, new to Midland Fox but latterly with Arriva North West & Wales.

### Transdev Lancashire United TD

Former Sovereign Volvo B10M-62/Plaxton Paragon C53F 301/2 (KE51 WUO/P)

**Right:** YN06 NZC is one of two 65-seater Irizar Century-bodied tri-axle Scania Ks that Italian-owned Terravision is operating on its Stansted Airport-London service. **KEITH MCGILLIVRAY**



**Above:** One of the most unusual vehicles that Stagecoach acquired with the Yorkshire Traction business was 50001 (YTC 858), a rare Gardner 6LYT-engined MCW Metroliner 400GT. It was operating a Megabus journey when photographed in London in May. **DAVE ROGERS**

have been noted here in allover white, but KE51 WUP has gone on loan to East Yorkshire.

### Transdev London TD

Volvo Olympian/Alexander RH-types VA6-10, 45/6/8/9, 54 (N136-40 YRW, R945/6/8/9 YOY) are in the commercial fleet for private hires and contracts, while VA17, 50-3 (XDZ 5917, R950-3 YOY) have become driver trainers. AEC Routemaster RML880 (WLT 880) — aka ER880 — has been repainted out of its heritage livery into standard red, as that is proving more popular for private hires.

### Transdev Yellow Buses TD

The requirement for low-floor single-deckers for the new core network has involved the acquisition of a quantity of secondhand Dennis Dart SLFs. In addition to the ex-London Wright Crusaders, the following, which appear to be from Dawsonrentals, have arrived: East Lancs Spryte-bodied 483-90/4/5 (P989-91/3 AFV, P135 LNF, R524 YRP, S399, 401 HVV, Y431/2 PBD), of which 483-6 are ex-Meteor Parking (Go-Ahead subsidiary), 487 is ex-Stuart, Dukinfeld, 488 is ex-Lielly, Wednesfield, 489/90 are ex-People's Express and 495 is ex-Manchester Airport; and Plaxton Pointer-bodied 491-3 (T464 HNH, W681/9 TNV). 491 was with NCP and 492 was originally with Capital Coaches and later with Cross Gates Motors. It is not known whether these have been bought or are on lease, but they are in Yellow Buses' livery.

Further double-deckers sold to Ensign (dealer), Purfleet, are Dennis Dominators 258/61/4/7/8 (H258/61/4 MFX, J267/8 SPR) and Volvo Citybuses 200/1/3/4 (D200 ELJ, C201 YPR D203/4 ELJ). Ensign has sold Dominators 263/8 (H263 MFX, J268 SPR) to

Coastal Liner, Wolverhampton and 258/64/6/9 (H258/64 MFX, J266/9 SPR) to NIBS, Wickford.

### Transit Group, Hare Street, Herts

Alexander Dennis Mini Pointer Dart EU06 KOW is at work, but DAF SB220/Optare Delta J202 VHN has been sold to Ensign, Purfleet (dealer).

### Travel London NX

New are Volvo B7TL/Wright Eclipse Gemini H45/23D V70-3 (LF06 YRC-G) and Alexander Dennis Pointer Dart B28D DP473-7 (LF06 YRJ-N). Twelve of the new Enviro200 Darts (six each at 8.5m and 10.2m length) have also been ordered.

The former Tellings-Golden Miller fleet has been renumbered, with thanks to LOTS:

Mini Pointer Darts 301-9/11-5 are DP41-9, 51-5; 317/23/19/20/2/38/21/4/49-58/25-35/9-48 are DP57-95; 10.1m Pointer Darts 401-4/7-9/11-3 are DP401 etc; Dart/East Lancs 451-7 are DE414-20; Dart Caetano 93 is DC433, 414/6/5/7-20/34-45/27/4/5/1-3/6/8-33/46/58-63 are DC434-72 and 616/5/4/3/7-20/21/3/4/7/6/8/5/9-33 are DC733-53; 10.6m Pointer Darts 501-10/20/15-9, 601-9/11/2 are DP701-11/5-9/21-9/31/2;

Step-entrance Darts 16/9, 25, 35/9, 48, 67 are DH16 etc;

Optare Excels 985/90-2 are E101-4; Mercedes-Benz minibuses 60, 705/6/49/07/8/17, 246 are MB1-8 (MB8 is former Travel West Midlands Vario/Alexander ALX100 R246 XDA.

Darts DA15-18 (Y215 HWF, Y116-8 HWB) have been renumbered DA5-8 and Stagecoach Darts 34196/19-23 (W196 DNO, V119/20/74/22/3 MVX) are numbered DP478-83.





### Travel West Midlands NX

Volvo B6LEs 592/3 (R592/3 YON) have been reinstated at West Bromwich.

Withdrawn are Mercedes-Benz Varios 268-70 (R268-70 XDA), Leyland Lynx 1315 (G315 EOG), MCW Metrobus Mk1s 2730 (A730 UOE), 2892 (C892 FON).

Sold are Lynxes 1123/68/83/90 (G123 EOG etc), 1221 (G221 EOG), 1315 (G315 EOG), Metrobuses 2532 (POG 532Y), 2652 (ROX 652Y), 2717/55/63 (A717 UOE, A755/63 WVP), 2918/52 (D918/52 NDA), 3093 (F93 XOF) and Lynx trainer 9210 (G210 EOG).

### Truronian, Truro

Volvo B12B/Plaxton Paragon TX06 NEX, in National Express livery, is new. TransBus Enviro300 EN02 EDN was re-registered KW02 DRZ on return to Dawsonrentals.

### TW Coaches, South Molton, Devon

Two new B28F Optare Solo SlimLines have been bought for the Lynton-Lynmouth-Barnstaple service, won under tender from Devon County Council. They have the 110kW Mercedes-Benz 904 engine to cope with the notorious 1: 4 hill out of Lynmouth.

### Vale, Manchester

New are Optare Solo MX06 ACD, VCA.

### Village Coaches, Findon, W Sussex

Convertible open-top ECW-bodied Bristol VRT/SL3 UWV 615S has been acquired and was noted recently at Brighton Palace Pier.

### Wealden PSV, Five Oak Green, Kent

Former Blue Bus, Bolton Dennis Javelin/Duple 300 B55F H163 DJU and Volvo B10M/Duple 300 B53F F709 WCS, ex-Mullany, Watford and new to Hutchison, Overtown, have been acquired via Ensign (dealer), Purfleet.

### Weardale Motor Services, Stanhope

Further Leyland Olympians are ex-Stagecoach East Alexander RL H51/36F-bodied F622/4 MSL and G640 EVV. Leyland Atlantean/Alexander AVK 176V and ex-Bournemouth Leyland Olympian/Marshall TJT 18X have been withdrawn.

### Weavaway, Newbury

Further to the May issue, Mercedes-Benz Vario YN06 CVX is actually YN06 CYX. In a change of plan, B10 MNX was not re-registered before sale.

### Westbus, Hounslow DG

This former National Express subsidiary is now owned by Metroline's owner, ComfortDelGro, and its first new vehicles since the takeover are Setra Comfort Class S415 GT-HD C49F BU06 CUO/V. Westbus was set up as Westbus UK as an offshoot of the Australian Westbus company in 1986 and runs 26 vehicles.

### Whittle, Kidderminster EY

Mercedes-Benz Vario/Plaxton Beaver 2 B27F from East Yorkshire are 69-71 (R449-51 PRH). Volvo B10M/Plaxton Paramount 3200 146 (E52 WAG) is to

stay here. An acquisition is ex-Chambers, Bures Vario 0814D/Beaver 2 S764 XNF.

### Wiltax, New Haw, Surrey

Acquired from Flights Hallmark is former Reading Leyland Titan/Park Royal H44/30F RT68 (YJB 68T). Also acquired is the first coach for this operator, Volvo B10M/Jonckheere Deauville C53F L214 GJO. MCW Metrobus KYV 659X has been sold to Mann, Gravesend.

### Z&S, Aylesbury

New is Sunsundegui-bodied Volvo B7R FJ06 ZKZ.

### Zak's, Great Barr, Birmingham

Three new orange and blue Optare Solo M850SL SlimLine/B29F supplied by Mistral in July for the new Stationlink contract in Birmingham city centre are MX06 BPE/K, BRV.

## ISLE OF MAN

### Isle of Man Transport

This year's six new double-deckers, Dennis Trident/East Lincs H47/27F 19-24 (HMN 244-9J), are the last-ever Tridents to be built, their chassis and body numbers following after those of the five new Blackpool buses.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Thanks from me on behalf of readers to each of the following for giving your time to contribute to my columns:

Please send reports as text within messages, not as e-mail attachments. Following computer damage on two occasions, attachments to messages will no longer be opened.

My thanks to each of the following for your most welcome contributions to Fleet News by letter and by e-mail: Neville Ames, John Angell, Simon Ayres, Andrew Babbs, Andrew Bagshaw, Chris Barker, Bill Barlow, Joe Beckley, Michael Bewes, Kenneth Bladon, Chris Bowles, Derek Bradfield, British Bus Publishing, British Trolleybus Society, Ivor Bufton, Bus Fare, Cambridge Omnibus Society, Cambus, Roger Carey, Anthony Carver-Smith, Andrew P. Churchill, Chris Corroy, Richard Cranmer, Crosville Enthusiasts Club, Cumbria Transport Society, Nigel Diplock, Julian Dolman, Nick Doolan, Ensignbus, Essex Bus Enthusiasts Group, Essex Bus News, Matthew Evans, Nathan Fisher, Ian Francis, Fylde Tramway Society, Greater Manchester Transport Society, Peter Guppy, Ken Hackling, David Harmsworth, Adrian Healey, Phil Hiles, Steven E. Hodgson, Derek Hollingworth, Tony F. Hunter, Clive Johnson, Paul D. Johnson, Gethin Jones, The Journal, David Jukes, Steven Knight, Lancaster & Morecambe PSV Society, Paul Landymore, Lincolnshire & East Yorkshire Transport Review, London Omnibus Traction Society, Christopher Lowe, M&D and East Kent Bus Club, M&T News, Merseyside Bus Club, Metroline, Geoff Mills, Ian Moorcroft, Mike Nash, Geoff Nelson, Ross Newman, Simon Nicholas, Billy Nicol, David A. Noddings, Northern Group Enthusiasts Club, Nottingham City Transport, Brendan O'Reilly, PSV Circle, Deric Pemberton, James Penton, Bob Perrin, John Podgorski, H. Powell, T. S. Powell, Ribble Enthusiasts Club, Graham Richardson, M. G. Robins, David Robinson, Rossendale Transport, Dave Russell, Phil Shafe, Norman Sharrock, Sheffield Omnibus Enthusiasts Society, Ian Simpson, Adrian C. Small, R. G. Smith, Paul Southall, Southdown Enthusiasts Club, Eric Speckman, Alan Spencer, Staffordshire Bus Enthusiasts Group, Stagecoach Manchester, Stagecoach Transit, David Stanier, Chris Stewart, Andy Tanner, John Taylor, John K. Taylor, Thamesdown Transport, Dave B. Thomas, Steve Thompson, Nick Thomson, Transpire — The Chesterfield Bus Society, United Enthusiasts Club, J. Watson, Trevor Watson, Michael P. Webster, Peter Weetman, Wessex bi-monthly Transport Review, Wessex Transport Society, West Yorkshire Information Service, West Yorkshire Metro Transport News, Wheels, Steve White's website (www.spw24.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk), Lee Whitehead, Dave Wilder, Trystan Williams, John Young.

# FLEET IN FOCUS

|                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>FLEET:</b>                     | D&G Coach and Bus Ltd.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>BASED:</b>                     | Head Office and depot — Mossfield Road, Adderley Green, Stoke on Trent, Staffordshire, with sub-depot at Lockitt Street, Crewe, Cheshire. Associated company is Choice Travel based at Planetary Road, Wednesfield, Willenhall, West Midlands.                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>WEBSITE:</b>                   | www.dgbus.co.uk                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>FOUNDED:</b>                   | March 1998 by David Reeves and Gerald Henderson, who worked together for the West Midlands Ambulance Service. Started with four secondhand minibuses, opened Adderley Green depot March 2004, added a Crewe depot 2005 (replaced mid-2006) and acquired Choice Travel April 2005. Gerald Henderson died very suddenly earlier this year.                                                     |
| <b>WHERE DOES IT OPERATE?:</b>    | Over 100 separate urban and rural routes in Staffordshire and Cheshire, extending east to Ashbourne, Derbyshire, west to Whitchurch, Shropshire, south to Lichfield and north to Stockport, Greater Manchester. A small percentage of the work is registered commercially, but most services are supported in some way by contracts. Includes town services in Cheadle, Stone and Uttoxeter. |
| <b>LIVERY:</b>                    | Fleet livery is cream and light blue, but 15 Optare Solos and Dennis Darts are owned by City of Stoke Council and painted in its red, white and blue Cityrider livery. Cheshire owns 11 buses, mostly Solos, which operate in its navy blue and yellow Rural Rider colours. Two Volkswagens are in Flexi Rider colours.                                                                      |
| <b>HOW MANY VEHICLES?:</b>        | D&G has 91 — 20 Mercedes-Benz 709Ds and 16 811Ds, 29 Optare Solos (six are SlimLine), two Volkswagen Bluebird 11-seaters and 24 Dennis Darts. Choice has a further 35 buses.                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>LATEST VEHICLES?:</b>          | Five Dennis Dart SLFs. Four ex-JP Travel, Middleton examples arrived in June, while Cheshire-owned W586 YDM — previously operated by Selwyn's of Runcorn — followed in July for a Flexi Rider service.                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>MOST INTERESTING VEHICLE?:</b> | The company says most of its vehicles are quite ordinary, but its early Mercedes-Benz minibuses were sourced from all over the country. Three East Lincs EL2000-bodied Dennis Darts (6-8: FJZ 4196, ENZ 4035, LUI 9649) are quite rare.                                                                                                                                                      |

**Right:** The shortest of three Wright Handybus-bodied Dennis Darts in the D&G fleet is 79 (H367 XGC), a 29-seater new to London General in 1991 and acquired last year ex-Arriva the Shires & Essex. In Go-Ahead ownership, it was transferred from London to the Wycombe Bus fleet, which Arriva took over in 2000. **CHRIS CLEGG**





Scottish reports should be sent, please, to:  
**Sandy Macdonald, 12 Morton Gardens,  
 Maxwell Park, Glasgow, G41 4AF** to reach him by  
**20 September** for the **November** issue.

## Allan, Gorebridge

MCW-bodied MCW Metrobus DR101/12 BYX 304V was acquired in June.

## Arriva Scotland West AA

B31F-seated Optare MetroRider MR15 909 (R909 JNL) and Northern Counties Palatine II H43/24D-bodied DAF DB250 7450 (R207 CKO) joined this fleet in May and June respectively from Arriva North East, but both were returned in July; the DAF was among vehicles operated to the T in the Park music festival in July. Arriva North East Alexander H45/29F-bodied Leyland Olympian 7273 (L273 FVN) also arrived in June and was allocated to Johnstone depot.

## Bain, Oldmeldrum

BMC Falcon 1100 buses BX54 VNV and SV06 ESG have been branded for service 777 (Oldmeldrum-Dyce Airport/Kirkhill Industrial Estate).

## Bulldog, Bathgate

Circular service 104 (Boghall/Bathgate/Whitburn/ Armadale) is to be cancelled from 2 October.

## Coakley, Motherwell

New 15min, Monday to Saturday daytime service 291 (Motherwell-Newarthill) started on 21 July, in competition with First Glasgow 255, Stepden 55 and Whitelaw 201. Service 241 (Glasgow-Pather) was renumbered 61 from the same date, with the Glasgow terminus changed from Hope Street to George Square.

## Cosgrove, Dundee

Van Hool Alizée C49Ft-bodied Volvo B10M-61 4464 RU (B238 VGS) and Duple C39F-bodied Dennis Javelin 8.5SDL G21 RHG (LVF 368, G778 CSB) had joined this fleet by May ex-White, Cumnock. First Aberdeen Plaxton Paramount-bodied Leyland Tiger TRCLXC/2RH 20026 (PSU 623, D52 VSO) was acquired for spares by June.

Van Hool Alizée-bodied Volvo B10M-62 B9 SBP (L10 BUS) passed to Moore, Belfast by May.

## Davidson, Bathgate

Service 90 (Livingston-Bents) is being cancelled from 21 August, when operation of Falkirk Council service 20 (Falkirk-Caldercruix) will start. Service 89/489 (Shotts/Fauldhouse-Livingston/Kirkton) is to be cancelled from 1 October, when new half-hourly weekday service 40 (Livingston-Polbeth via Stoneyburn, Loganlea and West Calder) starts.

## Davies, Plean

Plaxton CheetaH C33F-bodied Mercedes-Benz Vario O814D SF06 OEA was new in May.

Similar Onyx-bodied P100 BUS (ML02 ONH) regained its original registration by May.

## Docherty, Irvine

Duple Dominant-bodied Volvo B58-56 HCS 260N, purchased new in 1975, has been broken up on site at the farm owned near Kilwinning.

Notable vehicles sold to M8 Recovery (dealer), Uddington for scrap in June comprised Duple Dominant-bodied Volvo B58-56 SCS 384M which had been earmarked for restoration, Duple Dominant Express-bodied Leyland Leopard PSU3C/4R NCS 26P, Northern Counties-bodied Leyland Atlantean AN6B/1R ARC 670T, Leyland National 10351A/2R AYR 332T, Plaxton-bodied Leyland Leopard PSU3E/4R UBR 656V, Alexander AYS-bodied Leopard PSU3F/4R CSF 164W and Leyland National 2 NL116AL11/1R RRA 221X. SCS 384M and NCS 26P had been owned since new in 1974 and 1976 respectively, while NCS 26P and AYR 332T were used in the A1 Service fleet when Docherty was a member of that company.

## Dumfries & Galloway Council

The council's DGC Buses fleet continues to expand with the recent addition of another three buses. B37F-seated Optare Excel L1070 N208 LCK was acquired in June from Stagecoach Western, where it was numbered 35017. It was one of the first production Excels built for Blackpool Transport, was owned more recently by Docherty, Irvine and is to be used on the Stewartry Ring-n-Ride service.

B27F-seated Optare Solo M850 X200 CBC arrived by July; originally owned by Coakley, Motherwell, its purchase has been funded by Scottish Executive Rural Services Priority Areas monies to provide an improved service between Laurieston and Castle Douglas.

The third vehicle acquired by July is Alexander (Belfast) B62F-bodied Leyland Leopard PSU3E/4R WOI 2208 ex-Ulsterbus 208, which is to be used as a spare bus at Newton Stewart to cover while Optare Delta-bodied DAF SB220s are re-seated to B59F.

## Earnside, Glenfarg

Plaxton-bodied Volvo B10M-62 B10 MGR (T798 FRU, A15 XEL) was re-registered T798 FRU before being sold to Plaxton (dealer), Anston in May.

## First Aberdeen FG

National Express-liveried Plaxton C49Ft-bodied Dennis Javelin 21153 (T103 XDE) was transferred to this fleet from First Cymru in June. It has been used on contract duties and the National Express Aberdeen-London service.

Wright NimBus-bodied Mercedes-Benz 811D 50413 (K175 YVC) had left the fleet by May. Jonckheere Deauville-bodied Volvo B10M-60 20031 (G171 RBD, WSU 447, G171 RBD) was sold to Dunsmore (dealer), Larkhall in May, and Plaxton Paramount-bodied Leyland Tiger TRCLXC/2RH 20026 (PSU 623, D52 VSO) passed to Cosgrove, Dundee by June.

Alexander Dash-bodied Volvo B6-50 Fm7 (M677 SSX) of Ferrymill Motors, Torrance returned to its owner in June.

## First Edinburgh FG

First West Yorkshire Alexander Royale H43/29F-bodied Volvo Olympians 30826/7 (R646/7 HYG) joined this fleet in May.

Plaxton Profile C45FL-bodied Volvo B7R 20371 (CV55 AMK) was operated from Galashiels depot during June, to evaluate its wheelchair lift for use on service X95 (Carlisle-Edinburgh). Scania L94UB/Wright Solar 65751 (SN55 JVC) was lent to First Cymru in exchange.

Alexander Dash B40F-bodied Volvo B6-50 Fm16 (M736 BSU) of Ferrymill Motors, Torrance was on loan during May.

Plaxton Pointer-bodied Dennis Dart 40949 (N613 XJM) was burnt out near Birkenside in July. Northern Counties-bodied Leyland Olympian ONLXB/1RZ 30208 (F288 DRG) and Wright Access-ultralow-bodied Scania L113CRL 62294 (P506 XSH) were sold to dealers Dunsmore, Larkhall and Campbell, Alexandria respectively around May.

Edinburgh city service 86 ceased to serve Clerwood from 2 July, all journeys now terminating at Haymarket; evening buses also omit Gore Avenue to keep the running time between Haymarket and Birkenside on these journeys, to just under an hour.

New Midlothian Council services 302 (Mayfield-Bonnyrigg via Newtongrange and Eskbank Tesco) and 303 (Dalkeith-Gorebridge via Bonnyrigg) give improved links in the Dalkeith area, replacing subsidised circular service 383 (Dalkeith-Newtongrange).

The recent closure of Station Brae bridge in Galashiels to allow work to continue on the town's new Inner Ring Road has caused all services to the east to be diverted via High Road. As a result, Langlee services 7 (Winston Road) and 7A (Hawthorn Road) have been replaced at present by service 7B serving both termini.

As a result of the latest round of tendering by Falkirk Council, subsidised services 578/579 (Falkirk-Slamannan/Caldercruix), 580 (Falkirk-Monklands Hospital), 592 (Falkirk-Caldercruix) and 593 (Standburn-Falkirk) are being cancelled from 21 August.

A free daytime shuttle service has been operated this summer to link North Berwick rail station with the Scottish Seabird Centre and Museum of Flight. It has been arranged in conjunction with East Lothian Council and First ScotRail, and is due to run until the end of September.

## First Glasgow FG

Wright Fusion AB55D-bodied Volvo B10LA 10103 (V603 GGB) returned to this fleet from First Somerset & Avon by June. It has local fleet number AV3 and has been allocated to Scotstoun depot.

New Wright Eclipse Urban B43F-bodied Volvo B7RLE 69109 [SV797] (SF06 GZV) entered service from Scotstoun depot in June; similar 69107 [SV795] (SF06 GZS) was allocated initially to Scotstoun rather than Parkhead as previously reported.

**Below:** BU06 CTE, the first of two new Mercedes-Benz Citaros that Harte Buses is operating on its express service along the M8 between Greenock and Braehead shopping centre, near Renfrew. **PHIL HALEWOOD**





# SCOTTISH COLUMN

SANDY MACDONALD



## National Transport Award for service 500

Dumfries & Galloway Council won a top award at the National Transport Awards ceremony in London on 18 July.

Innovative service 500 (Stranraer-Dumfries), which Stagecoach Western operates on behalf of the council, beat shortlisted entries from Leicestershire and Worcestershire to win the top bus award in the competition, which is run in conjunction with the Aberdeen-based Robert Gordon University's Centre for Transport Policy.

The 75-mile service, which currently carries about 11,500 passengers a month, was significantly improved early this year with the introduction of two new Wright Eclipse Commuter-bodied Volvo B7RLE wheelchair accessible coaches. When launched in 2002, it carried an average of 3,000 passengers each month. Continued improvements to frequencies, times and vehicle quality have all contributed to the growth in passenger use.

These vehicles — the first and still the only examples of their kind in service on mainland UK — allow passengers in wheelchairs to gain instant access, and sit near the front by the driver on the low floor section. Other passengers travel in coach comfort in the raised section of the vehicle. The cost of the vehicles was met through a transport grant from the Scottish Executive, while the council meets the running costs.

The Scottish Executive has also contributed £920,000 towards the service over the past four years as part of the Dumfries & Galloway quality of life programme, which seeks to enhance community wellbeing, improve the local environment and help realise the council's vision of making this south-west Scottish region the best place in the country to live, learn, work, visit and grow. By funding this lifeline bus service, it aims to reduce social exclusion for non-car owning residents, improve access for older and disabled people to services including better access to healthcare facilities, increase access to employment

opportunities and reduce some of the unwanted environmental impacts of travel across the region.

The wheelchair-accessible coaches, which provide half of the service, also accommodate bicycles in underfloor lockers and are used to transport internal mail for the council between Dumfries and Stranraer. Following requests from regular passengers, two refurbished coaches were introduced on to the remaining journeys at Easter, offering coach quality on virtually every journey.

Councillor John Forteath, vice-chair of the council's planning and environment committee, says: 'The reward is just recognition of the efforts of Dumfries & Galloway Council, in partnership with the Scottish Executive and its local bus companies (in this case Stagecoach West Scotland) to bring about improvements to its bus services. In connection with service 500, thanks are due to all the staff who have contributed in the passenger transport section of the council and at Stagecoach.'

## Stagecoach Western hails Bus Route Development Grant success stories

Stagecoach Western has also been successful with several Bus Route Development Grant schemes — Scottish equivalent of Kick-Start — in the Strathclyde Partnership for Transport area.

The company's first BRDG-funded service was the X16, which has linked Ayr, Prestwick Airport, Kilmarnock, East Kilbride and Hamilton hourly since 30 January. It has proved to be an extremely popular route and a vital connection between Lanarkshire and Ayrshire. After less than four months' operation, it carried its 50,000th passenger on 22 May, leading the company to claim that this is its most successful new service ever. Regular user Tam Main, who travels on the X16 four times a week, received a bottle of champagne and a free SPT Day Tripper ticket that day.

Stagecoach Western managing director Sam Greer says: 'We are delighted with the success of the X16 and have been encouraged by the volume of customers using the service, so much so that we increased the frequency from hourly to half-hourly at our busiest times of the day. The grant from the Scottish Executive together with the support of SPT has allowed this route to flourish.' In addition to the new Alexander Dennis ALX300-bodied MAN 18.220 single-deckers acquired for the service, Jonckheere Monaco-bodied MAN double-deck coaches have been used as duplicates and at peak travel times.

The Scottish Executive has also approved BRDG funding for a further two schemes put forward by SPT on behalf of Stagecoach Western.

The first of these — worth £352,000 — will upgrade Cumnock town service 49 around September using three new Optare Solos. The Monday to Saturday daytime frequency goes up from two to three buses per hour, with half-hourly evening and Sunday services, and provision of a new weekly ticket to link the service to the X76 express to Muirkirk, Cumnock, Kilmarnock and Glasgow. Part of the grant will allow East Ayrshire Council to provide Kassel kerbing and improved bus shelters.

The second proposal approved is to enhance service 18 (Stevenston, Hayocks-Saltcoats, New England). SPT was unable to support an earlier proposal to do this with BRDF money as the First Glasgow 11A service between Ardrossan and Kilmarnock covered a substantial part of the route; this obstacle was removed after First withdrew that service last year.

The Scottish Executive has already provided substantial funding for infrastructure improvement along the Ardrossan-Kilmarnock trunk route, and upgrading of the feeder bus routes builds on this investment. Now, with the service 18 grant application approved, Monday to Saturday daytime frequency is to be increased from four to six buses per hour, evening and Sunday frequency will be increased from 40 to 30min, and through ticketing introduced with service 11 (Ardrossan-Kilmarnock). Five new MAN single-deckers are due later in the year to operate the improved service, and the £510,200 grant includes an element for North Ayrshire Council to spend on bus stop enhancements and new shelters.

Alexander Dash-bodied Volvo B6-41 48885 (L678 RMD) has local fleetnumber MV61.

Further to previous reports of Plaxton Pointer-bodied Dennis Dart SLFs being transferred to other fleets in January or February, 40789 [MD112] (R293 GHS) did not leave for First South Yorkshire until April, and 40784-8/90-5 [MD107-11/3-18] (R288-92/4-9 GHS) did not transfer to First Hampshire & Dorset until June.

Alexander-bodied Volvo Citybus B10M-50s 31275/80/95 [AH15, 42, 77] (F97 JYS, G290 OGE, G521 RDS) were sold to Dunsmore (dealer), Larkhall in May, while similar 31311/9 [AH101, 72] (G545 RDS, G700 PNS) were sold for preservation in July and June respectively.

As reported in Preservation Update last month, the five former Glasgow Corporation Transport vehicles, comprising Alexander H41/31F-bodied Leyland Titan PD3/2 39996 (SGD 448), Alexander H33/28R-bodied Leyland Titan PD2/24 39997 (SGD 65), similar GCT 029/28R-bodied 39998 (FYS 8, HSK 953, LDS 388A, SGD 10), Alexander H41/32R-bodied Daimler CVD650-30 (Gardner 6LW) 39999 (FYS 999) and AEC Regent 0661 tow truck BUS 181, were acquired by Glasgow City Council in June for continued preservation and will initially be housed at the Glasgow Vintage Vehicle Trust premises at Bridgeton.

Following the latest round of commercial service changes from 2 July, new tendered services operated on behalf of Strathclyde Partnership for Transport are 65 (Osborne Street-Bridgeton via Ballater Street, Monday to Saturday daytime) and 131 (Osborne Street-East Kilbride, Kingsgate via Victoria Infirmary, Carmunnock and Stewartfield, evenings and Sundays). New commercial service 162 (City Centre-Baillieston) is being operated from 21 August as a replacement for similar Stagecoach Glasgow service 162 withdrawn from that date.



**Above:** Henderson of Hamilton has the first Optare Tempo for a Scottish fleet. 206 (YJ06 YSH) is a 10.6m X1060 model — the shortest Tempo available — and it is painted in Strathclyde Partnership for Transport carmine and cream — colours inspired by 1950s British Railways livery. In this view in SPT's Buchanan bus station in Glasgow, it is displaying a colloquial version of the 'Sorry, I'm not in service' destination message. **PHIL HALEWOOD**

### Fitzcharles, Grangemouth

Plaxton C48F-bodied Volvo B10M-62 W646 FUM joined this fleet in April ex-National Holidays Coaches 967.

### Goosecroft, Denny

Plaxton-bodied Mercedes-Benz 709D K446 XRF was sold to Blythswood (dealer), Glasgow in April.

Weekday daytime service BN1 (Banknock-Stirling city centre/Stirling University) is due to start on 28 August.

### Harte, Greenock

The second Mercedes-Benz Citaro for this fleet entered service on the Braehead services in June. Registered BU06 HSV, it is in full beige and orange fleet livery.

Plaxton Premiere-bodied Volvo B10M-62 IIB 379 (N575 ACP, 4030 WA, N203 HWX) has been repainted into the same livery to match the Citaros — beige with orange roof, skirt and corners — although the large Braehead Express branding has still to be applied.

Further to last month's report, Plaxton Premiere-bodied Volvo B10M-62 M351 MRU (428 EXA, M351 MRU, A14 EXC) was re-registered IIB 1618 shortly after acquisition last year; it would have been re-registered again before disposal in June but its new mark is not known.

Plaxton Premiere 350-bodied Volvo B10M-62 IIB 7633 (P59 XNL) was sold to Blythswood (dealer), Glasgow by July.

GROUP  
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LB  
Lothian  
Buses  
NX  
National  
Express  
Group  
RN  
Rapsons  
ST  
Stagecoach  
Group





SN06 BSU, the 12.5m Alexander Dennis Enviro300 yellow schoolbus that entered service with Highland Country in Portree, Skye in June, shortly before the start of the Scottish school holidays. **JIM CAMPBELL**

### Henderson, Hamilton

New B20F-seated Optare Solo M880 306 (YJ06 YSE) and similar B33F-seated M950 406 (YJ06 YSF) were due to be delivered at the end of July, bringing the number of vehicles of this type to 23 out of an operational fleet strength of 36.

To cover operations until they arrived, B29F-seated Solo M850s X332 ABU and X248 VWR were hired from Blythswood (dealer), Glasgow for several weeks during July. They were previously with Garelochhead Coaches and Silverdale, Airdrie respectively.

Alexander (Belfast)-bodied Mercedes-Benz 711D P455 MFS was withdrawn in July.

### Highland Country RN

Allover yellow B60F-seated Alexander Dennis Enviro300 SN06 BSU entered service use from Portree depot on 22 June, complete with Rapsons fleetnames.

Plaxton-bodied Volvo B10M-62 630 (FSU 331, N906 AAS) was transferred to this fleet from Rapsons Coaches last June, but this has not been recorded until now.

Recent additions to this fleet comprise Plaxton Premiere C53F-bodied Volvo B10M-62 672 (M115 UWY) ex-Apple, Slough in April and similar L673 OHL ex-McLean, Witney in May. 672 has been used in the white and red livery in which it arrived, and was re-registered ESK 983 around June.

Recently acquired Van Hool Alizée-bodied Volvo B10M-62 676 (VRG 939, M873 GYS) reverted to its original registration around July, but was expected to become 200 UWX soon after. Plaxton Pointer-bodied Dennis Dart 9.8SDL 200 (P817 EST) was also re-registered MIL 6675 by then, and Van Hool Alizée-bodied DAF SB3000 639 (719 CEL, R272 FBX) had reverted to its original registration by July.

East Lancs-bodied Volvo B10M-55s H917/23 XYT were numbered 543/4 in March.

Jonckheere-bodied Volvo B10M-62 651 was given metallic blue and navy colours around April and similar Plaxton-bodied 644 was repainted into blue and navy bus livery around May. Plaxton-bodied Mercedes-Benz 811D 082 was also in blue and navy by July, with Orkney fleetnames despite being based at Inverness depot. Plaxton-bodied Volvo B10M-62s 629/30/43 had their Scottish Citylink lettering removed around July.

Hired Alexander Dash-bodied Volvo B6-50 M511 FWV (401 DCD, M401 BFG) returned to Stagecoach Bluebird in July.

### Horsburgh, Pumphreston

Service 281 (Livingston circular) is to be cancelled from 2 October.

### Hutchison, Overtown

Berkhof Axial-bodied Volvo B10M-62 R296 PTF was hired from Moseley (dealer), Glenmavis in May to help cope with hires and tours business then. It was being

used in the livery of its previous owner, Sim's Travel, but with Hutchison fleetnames.

Despite having had its David Urquhart Travel vinyls removed and being advertised for sale, similar T732 JGB has had Scottish Pullman fleet names applied and has been used throughout the tour season.

### Irvine, Law

Van Hool Alizée-bodied Scania K124IB4 T9 RVN (T147 HHG, T9 RED) was sold to Blythswood (dealer), Glasgow by July.

### Jay, Greengairs

Optare Solos YJ06 YRF/G were new in July for use on the Strathclyde Partnership for Transport East Dunbartonshire Ring'n'Ride service and are in SPT livery.

### Johnson, Brae

Shetland Islands Council Dial-a-ride service R32 (Brae Health Centre-Firth/Mossbank/Voe) started on 4 August, operating on weekdays only at 11.00.

### Lothian LB

The first of the five Polish-built Scania OmniCity CN94UD double-deckers for the Airlink service was delivered in July, registered SK06 AHG.

### McColl, Balloch

Plaxton Beaver 2-bodied Mercedes-Benz Varios P257 RUM, W514 PSF have been given the red-based advertising treatment for Your Radio.

### McGill, Greenock

Fire destroyed Marshall C37-bodied Dennis Dart 9.8SDL N508 KCD on 5 May.

### McKindless, Wishaw

Further vehicles acquired from First Stop, Renfrew in May comprise Carlyle Dartline-bodied Dennis Dart 8.5SDLs RIL 9304 (H84 MOB), RIL 9654 (G54 TGV), H880 LOX (236 CLT, H880 LOX), H82, 125/34 MOB, H160 NON; Wright Handybus-bodied Dennis Dart 9SDL K368 RTY; and B26F-seated Marshall Minibus R103 VLX. Optare Delta B49F-bodied DAF SB220LCs G734/9 RTY were acquired in July ex-Go North East 4734/9.

Wright Handybus-bodied Dennis Dart 9SDLs JDZ 2404/12 and similar Plaxton Pointer-bodied J609 XHL, K102 SAG were among a large number of vehicles being broken up for spares in July.

New service X21 (Lanark-East Kilbride bus station via Carlisle and Motherwell) starts on 21 August.

### McNairn, Coatbridge

New commercial services started on 26 July are 202 (Monklands Hospital-Salsburgh), which replaces similar service 200 withdrawn at that time by Irvine, Law, and

444 (Wishaw-Coltness), which maintains part of McNairn service 202 (Wishaw-Clelland) also withdrawn then.

### Meffan, Kirriemuir ST

North West Conversions-bodied Mercedes-Benz 609D E73 ECH had left the fleet by June.

### M-Line, Alloa

Mercedes-Benz Vario O814D MX06 OOE was new in May but bodywork details are unknown at present. Two other acquisitions last November were Plaxton C53F-bodied Volvo B10M-60s F854 LTU (684 DYX, F521 RTL, KRO 718, F511 NFW) and G970 KTX, both ex-Pearce, High Wycombe.

### Moffat & Williamson, St Fort

Service 5 (Glenrothes bus station-Markinch, Hill Terrace) has been cancelled from 15 September.

### Morrin Group, Renfrew

Carlyle Dartline B28F-bodied Dennis Dart 8.5SDL H71 MOB was acquired by July ex-Stagecoach Fife 32347, and has entered service in allover white.

Alexander (Belfast)-bodied Mercedes-Benz 709Ds N996/7 CCC passed to Skyline, Renfrew by July.

### Munro, Jedburgh

New MCV Evolution-bodied MAN 14.220s AE06 VPO/P arrived in July and the remainder were due by August.

### Mundell, Port Askaig

Former military Wadham Stringer-bodied Dennis Javelin P61 YDS was acquired in May, but its previous identity is unknown. It is to be repainted into fleet livery in time for the start of the new school term at the end of August.

### Petrie, Forfar

Friday and Saturday evening service 320 (Forfar, Easterbank-Dundee, Baluniefield Leisure Complex) has been registered to start from 21 August.

### Rowe, Muirkirk

Optare Solo M920 WL03 AOL was acquired by July for use on the Strathclyde Partnership for Transport Kilmarnock town centre service.

### Royal Mail

More postbus services cancelled from 18 September comprise 100 (Dingwall circular), 110 (Halkirk-Altnabreac), 118 (Kyle-Letterfearn), 122 (Lochinver-Drumbeg), 129 (Scourie-Elphin) and 130 (Scourie-Kylestrome).

### Simpson, Rosehearty

Caetano Enigma-bodied Volvo B12B SM06 SON is named *Pride of Rosehearty*.



## Skyline, Glasgow

Alexander (Belfast)-B27F bodied Mercedes-Benz 709Ds N996/7 CCC were acquired from Morrin, Renfrew by July. Carlyle Dartline B28F-bodied Dennis Dart 8.5SDL H154 MOB also joined the fleet in July and is in a new two-tone blue and cream version of fleet livery. It was previously Stagecoach Fife 32344.

## Smith, Patna

Service 370 (Ayr Hospital-Crosshouse Hospital) was started on 24 July on behalf of Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, and is funded by Ayrshire & Arran NHS to provide a direct facility for specific groups of users. It provides several return journeys daily.

## Stagecoach Bluebird ST

Plaxton Profile-bodied Volvo B7Rs SV06 FTF/J are the first of 11 due for this company for allocation to Moray. They will allow a similar number of the first Disability Discrimination Act-compliant batch to be re-allocated between Inverness and Aberdeen to complete the conversion of service 10 to wheelchair accessible coaches, while the others displaced will later be re-branded for services in Easter Ross.

Alexander-bodied Dennis Dart SLF 33434 (X434 NSE) was re-registered TSV 718 in June. Plaxton-bodied Volvo B10M-60s 52103 (MSU 463, VLT 54, J430 HDS) and 52118 (TSU 641, K760 FYG) reverted to their original registrations then.

Alexander Dash-bodied Volvo B6-50 30802 returned from loan to Highland Country in May, similar 30801 returning in July.

Alexander (Belfast)-bodied Mercedes-Benz 709D 40689 (L689 CDD) left the fleet in May.

## Stagecoach Fife ST

SP06 FNA, the first of four new Optare Solos to be allocated to Glenrothes depot, arrived in July. It is a B28F-seated SlimLine M850, but the other three due are to be the standard M850 version.

The first of the forthcoming Plaxton Profile-bodied Volvo B7Rs was expected to arrive in July. They are to replace Plaxton Interurban-bodied Volvo B10M-62s and will be numbered 53248-61 (SP06 FVA-H/J-O). Eight will be allocated to Dunfermline depot, the other six to Aberhill.

Leyland-bodied Leyland Titan TNLXB2RR 10858 (A858 SUL) was received from Stagecoach Bluebird in March to be converted for charity use. It was previously operated between April 1997 and April 2004.

Alexander-bodied Volvo B10M-55s 20315/21/4 (M315 PKS, N321/4 VMS) and Plaxton Interurban-bodied Volvo B10M-62s 52249/50/4 (M949/50 TSX) were transferred to Strathgait in May (20321/4) or June.

Carlyle Dartline-bodied Dennis Dart 8.5SDLs 32343/7 (H154, 71 MOB) passed respectively to Morrin, Renfrew and Skyline, Glasgow by July.

## Stagecoach Glasgow ST

M8-seated Mercedes-Benz Vito 110CDi taxibuses 60004/5/7/8 (SW03 OYE/F/H/J) were transferred to this fleet from Stagecoach Western in May for use on the Scottish Citylink Hotel Hopair service between Glasgow city centre and Glasgow Airport. They carry Scottish Citylink, Sandgate, Ayr legal lettering on their two-tone blue livery.

Alexander PS DP48F-bodied Volvo B10M-55s 20192/4/7 (M592/4/7 OSO) arrived from Stagecoach Merseyside in June, and were put to work on service X19 (City Centre-Easterhouse) in corporate livery rather than Magic Bus blue. Plaxton Interurban C51F-bodied Volvo B10M-62 52282 (N142 XSA) joined the fleet from Stagecoach Western in June, followed in July by former AA Motors Alexander B51F-bodied Scania L113CRL 28955 (M100 AAB), although the latter was not expected to stay for long.

Service 162 (Glasgow city centre-Baillieston) is being withdrawn from 22 August, reducing the company's presence on routes within the city to only service X19.

Alexander-bodied Leyland Olympian ONLXB/1R 14642 (C642 LFT) was sold to End of Life Vehicles (dealer), Glasgow in May.

## Stagecoach Western ST

B27F-seated Optare Solo M850 47314 (SF06 OVE) was new in June and has been allocated to Kilmarnock depot. It was part-funded by Strathclyde Partnership for Transport to allow conversion of part-subsidised Stewarston town service (renumbered 219/319) to low-floor operation. Although delivered in corporate livery, it was repainted in SPT carmine and cream before entering service. Another eight new Solos in corporate livery began arriving in July, for use from Ayr depot on services A9, 14E, 53 and 57. They are expected to include 47356-62, and the first reported in service is 47359 (SF06 OVK).

With the whole of South Ayrshire included within the SPT statutory boundary, ownership of dedicated Carrick Connector Solo 47041 passed from the council to SPT in June, although Stagecoach Western still operates it under the terms of the Carrick Connector contract. Shortly after the change of ownership, the vehicle lost its mainly yellow livery in favour of SPT colours.

To mark the 75th anniversary of the Ayrshire Bus Owners Association – AA Service becoming a limited company on 19 May 1931, Alexander-bodied Volvo Olympian 16866 (N866 VHH) was repainted into a double-deck version of the AA Buses green and cream livery of the Volvo B6LEs used on Irvine local services, with cream window surrounds on both decks. The original AA consortium broke away from the A1 Service co-operative in 1930.

Purple Alexander-bodied Volvo Olympian 16864 (N864 VHH) is PO47/32F ex-H47/32F and is being used on the Brodick Pier-Brodick Castle service, rather than the Arran Open-top Experience, which appears not to have operated this year.

Plaxton-bodied articulated Volvo B10M-55 51073 was badly damaged by fire on 30 June.

*continued overleaf...*

# FLEET IN FOCUS

**FLEET:** Bowman's Coaches (Mull) Ltd

**BASED:** Scallastle, Craignure, Mull, Argyll & Bute

**FOUNDED:** Fifty years ago, after John Cameron of Bunessan died in 1956 and his passenger and mail service connecting the Craignure mail boat and the Iona Ferry at Fionnphort was taken over by Robert Bowman of Scallastle Farm, Craignure. Significant expansion took place in 1976 when Highland Omnibuses surrendered its former MacBrayne operations on Mull. Bowman took over five vehicles in the process, making the firm the principal bus operator on the island. Despite a temporary setback in 1994 with all contracted work lost to Essbee Coaches of Coatbridge under competitive tendering and a consequent Mull bus war – including the introduction of weekend express services between Glasgow, Tobermory and Fionnphort – Bowman's Coaches has since regained that position.

**WHERE DOES IT OPERATE?:** In addition to private hires, most local bus services (495: Craignure-Tobermory and 496: Craignure-Fionnphort) and bus-operated school contracts on Mull are operated, and an extensive coach/ferry tours business (Iona, Staffa, Treshnish Isles, Tobermory) is conducted with the aid of strategically placed offices in Oban on the mainland.

**LIVERY:** Initially dark blue and cream, but around 1970 this gave way to the current cream and red.

**HOW MANY VEHICLES?:** 15 vehicles are authorised.

**MOST UNUSUAL VEHICLE?:** Cameron's two Austins and a prewar Waveney-bodied Commer formed the initial fleet, but these were replaced quickly by the first of many Bedford coaches. Ford R-series, Leyland Tiger, and Dennis Javelin coaches have also featured, with mainly DAF and Volvo at present, but ex-London Country Green Line Alexander W-bodied AEC Swift JPF 103K was an unusual purchase in 1986.



**Above:** FTC 850J, a dealer-registered Ford R192 with Willowbrook dual purpose body new to Bowman's, waiting at Craignure Pier around 1975, ready to carry day trippers to Fionnphort and the ferry to Iona. **A.S. MILLAR**



**One of Bowman's current vehicles, Plaxton Paramount 3500-bodied Volvo B10M H837 AHS, at Fionnphort. New to Park's of Hamilton in 1991, it reached Bowman's in 2000 after service with Goode's of West Bromwich. **ANN CAUSER****



Another notable recent repaint is that of Leyland Titan 10005 into Scottish Citylink blue and yellow for use as a promotional vehicle. One of its first duties was as an information bus at the T in the Park event at Balado in July.

Plaxton Interurban-bodied Volvo B10M-62 52456 was repainted into current corporate livery in May, and was the last active vehicle in this fleet in Stagecoach stripes. The revised training livery of red with orange and blue swoops at the rear has been applied to Alexander-bodied Scania N113CRB 28910, Alexander (Belfast)-bodied Mercedes-Benz 709D 40622 and Plaxton-bodied Volvo B10M-60s 52069/76/86/8.

Plaxton-bodied articulated Volvo B10M-55 51073 was badly damaged by fire on 30 June.

Mercedes-Benz Vito 110CDi minibuses 60004/5/7/8 (SW03 OYE/F/H/J) were not used by this company, but were transferred to Stagecoach Glasgow in May. Plaxton Interurban-bodied Volvo B10M-62 52282 (N142 XSA) and Alexander B51F-bodied Scania L113CRL 28955 (M100 AAB) followed in June and July respectively, although the latter was not expected to stay for long. Alexander-bodied Leyland Olympian ONLXB/1R 14641 (C641 LFT) was sold to End of Life Vehicles (dealer), Glasgow in May and former Docherty, Irvine Optare Excel L1070 35017 (N208 LCK) passed to Dumfries & Galloway Council in June.

CS 3364, an Alexander B37F-bodied Leyland Cheetah LZ2 new to Western SMT in April 1936, was acquired by a Dunfermline-based preservationist in May. Although its existence was not widely known, the vehicle has been based for some time in Newcastle-on-Tyne, Shropshire. It should eventually appear at the Scottish Vintage Bus Museum.

New limited stop service X33 (Ayr bus station-Paisley Cross or Reid Kerr College via Irvine, Kilwinning and Beith) is due to start on 21 August and will be operated by Ardrossan depot.

The former Girvan depot was finally demolished in May, no further use having been found for the premises since closure.

### Steele, Stevenston

The last double-decker owned by this former A1 Service operator was offered for sale in June, preferably for preservation, leaving the firm running only coaches. The vehicle concerned is Northern Counties H47/31D-bodied Leyland Atlantean AN68A/1R ATV 672T, which was new as Nottingham City Transport 672 in 1978 and acquired by Steele in 1996. As with all double-deckers owned since disposal of the A1 Service business to Stagecoach in 1995, it is in full, traditional A1 livery of azure blue, off-white and morocco maroon.

### Stepend, Glenmavis

Plaxton Beaver B31F-bodied Mercedes-Benz 709D K883 UDB had joined this fleet by last November. Other acquisitions by April were Plaxton Beaver 2-bodied Mercedes-Benz Vario O814D SF53 KUW and W10 CAE, a Van Hool Alizée-bodied Volvo tri-axle, which has been used in a silver and red livery.

### Straththay ST

More vehicles transferred from Stagecoach Fife by June are Alexander PS DP48F-bodied Volvo B10M-55 20315 (M315 PKS), similar B49F-bodied 20321 (N321 VMS) and Plaxton Interurban C51F-bodied Volvo B10M-62s 52249/50/4 (M949/50/4 TSX). 20315 has been allocated to Montrose depot, 20321 and 52249 to Blairgowrie.

Last October, Alexander-bodied Leyland Leopard 546 had its orange areas repainted yellow to form a school bus livery variation, but is destined to remain unique.

Although repaints into Stagecoach corporate livery were carried out initially at the Stagecoach Western Kilmarnock depot, since May repainting has switched to the Aberhill depot of Stagecoach Fife. The first vehicle to be treated there was East Lancs-bodied Dennis Dart SLF 314, followed by Wright Handybus-bodied Darts 303/5 and Wright Renown-bodied Volvo B10BLEs 616/7. The latter four returned with their new national fleet numbers 32478/80, 21127/8 respectively and it was anticipated that the whole fleet would be renumbered by July. Optare Solo 260 (YJ55 BHW) has been noted carrying national fleet number 47260, still in Straththay livery and with its old fleet numbers removed.

Plaxton-bodied Volvo B10M-61 403 (WLT 610, E769 AHL, RHE 194, E664 UNE) was sold to RGC Recyclers (dealer), Dundee in May.



**Above:** The Scottish Bus Group is recalled in spades on WJC Buses VV97 (G97 PES), an Alexander-bodied Volvo Citybus new to Tayside. It undertakes regular work for Scottish Citylink, whose colours it wears, but the fleetname style and colour application also evokes memories of Kelvin Scottish of 20 years ago. The fleetnumber is in the style of Eastern Scottish. **KEITH MCGILLIVRAY**

### Stuart, Carlisle

East Lancs H49/39F-bodied Volvo Citybus B10M-50 G653 EKA was acquired in July ex-Arriva North West 3653.

A revised livery of darker blue with silver window surrounds and roof is being applied to the double-deckers in this fleet, replacing the previous two-tone blue.

Leyland Lynx LX1126LXC F723 LRG and similar LX2R G38 VME had left the fleet by June.

### Thistle, Dalry

Marshall C31 B19F-bodied Iveco TurboDaily 59-12 M8 BLU was acquired recently for use on the Dalry town service. New to Bluebird, Middleton, it was last recorded with M-Line, Alloa. Alexander-bodied Mercedes-Benz 709D L628 LWS has also been owned for some time, but further details are not known.

### Thomson Group, Glasgow

Caetano-bodied Dennis Dart SLF T416 LGP has had Airbus Express lettering applied to its new yellow livery. It appears that the all-over red livery used for the non-Airbus Express vehicles is being abandoned in favour of all-over white with dark blue fleetnames; Mercedes-Benz 709Ds M665 JFP, M238 UTM are the first examples reported.

### Travel Direct, Renfrew

Plaxton Beaver B25F-bodied Mercedes-Benz 709D M262 HOD was acquired in June ex-Plymouth 262.

### Travel Dundee NX

In June, Wright Liberator-bodied Volvo B10L 143 was given the revised livery with deeper blue skirt extending up to window level.

### Walker Group, Barrhead

Alexander Sprint-bodied Mercedes-Benz 709Ds N473/5 XRC have been repainted into the all-over yellow livery. Vehicles in the First Stop Travel fleet have been given large First Stop fleetnames in two-tone blue.

### Waverley, Edinburgh

KX06 LYS is a new Alexander Dennis Pointer Dart reported in service by April, but further details are not known.

### Weir, Clydebank

This company ceased to trade earlier in the year. One of the vehicles in the fleet at that time, Alexander B53F-bodied Leyland Leopard PSU3E/4R GSO 94V — new

in 1980 as Alexander (Northern) NPE94 — was acquired by a preservationist in May.

### West Coast, Campbeltown

Service 422 (Lochgilhead-Ardishaig, Glenfyne Park) was enhanced from 10 July as a result of a successful Bus Route Development Grant application in partnership with Argyll & Bute Council. A half-hourly weekday daytime frequency is offered (hourly on Saturdays) on the route, which includes the new Mid Argyll Hospital.

### Whitelaw, Stonehouse

7994 WW, a new 12.2m C48F-seated Volvo 9700 Prestige Plus (B12B running units), had arrived by June and is in a mainly white livery.

### Wilson, Gourcock

AEC Routemaster JJD 467D is in an all-over gold livery and, together with open-top Routemaster HSL 660, has been used on service 22 (Greenock-Helensburgh). The third Routemaster owned, SMK 691F, remains in London red meantime.

### Wishart, Frickheim NX

B26F-seated Optare Solo M850s W241-3 (S233/1/5 EWU) were transferred to this fleet from Travel West Midlands in June. They are in the Travel Dundee livery style with deeper blue skirt, and carry Travel Wishart fleetnames.

### WJC Buses, Chapelhall

Alexander-bodied Volvo Citybus B10M-50 VV97 (G97 PES) has been repainted into a striking version of Scottish Citylink two-tone blue and yellow livery, reminiscent of one of the Kelvin Scottish liveries, and carries Scottish Bus Group-style WJC Buses fleetnames incorporating the Saltire logo.

Van Hool Alizée-bodied DAF SB2305 XF629 (WJI 6293, NIL 1478, F629 OHD) has been withdrawn and is being used as a source of spares.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

M. Anderson, D. Ansell, C. Douglas, J. Dunne, First Glasgow, P. Halewood, A. Hamill, T. Hamilton, Harte Bus Company, T. Johnson, Lothian Buses, E. McSheffrey, G. Munro, B. Nicol, S. Oliver, PSV Circle, Rapson Group, Stagecoach Bluebird, Stagecoach Glasgow, Stagecoach Western, scotlandbus@yahooogroups.com, sescotbus@yahooogroups.com., R. Walter and the Western Enthusiasts Club have contributed news items this month. Their assistance is gratefully acknowledged.



## Where to send your Irish news reports

Reports on Northern Ireland operators, please, to:  
**G. Irvine Millar, 54 Castlemore Avenue,  
Belfast, BT6 9RG.**

Reports on Irish Republic operators, please, to:  
**Ian Molloy, Willow Grove, Newtownpark Avenue,  
Blackrock, Co Dublin,  
or by e-mail to: [ianmolloy30@gmail.com](mailto:ianmolloy30@gmail.com)**

## MAJOR OPERATORS

### Ulsterbus

More new MAN ND363F/Ayats Bravo 1 double-deck Goldline coaches are 2003/8-9/11-3 (AXI 283/98/311-3). All are allocated to Londonderry, except 2013 (Coleraine). Unregistered Bravos 2020/1 were spotted during their delivery run through south west Scotland.

It transpires that new Scania L94UB/Wright Solar B43F buses 829-38/40 (GEZ 7829-38/40) reported last month did not enter service until August.

Twenty-seven Alexander-bodied Leyland Leopards were withdrawn to reserve at the end of June, marking the end of this type of vehicle in Ulsterbus service (see p28). Those which survived until the end of June were 139/45 (EEZ 6838, ROI 139; FEZ 8164, ROI 145) new in 1978; 166/79/98 (UOI 9166, VOI 179, IEZ 1150 VOI 198) of 1980; 213/720/6/37/40/2/4/54 (WOI 2213 etc) of 1981; 260/87/13/5/9 (YOI 2260 etc) and 288/90/9, 316 (AXI 288 etc) of 1982 and 330/1/4 (BXI 325, GEZ 5605, BXI 330; BXI 331/4) of 1983. The last Leopard to operate in service was 299, at Londonderry, which operated the 22.00 departure to Eglinton on service 143, returning at 22.25 on 30 June.

Two Leopards withdrawn with accident damage just before the end of June were 227/83 (WOI 2227; IEZ 2530, AXI 283). Three more sold for preservation are Alexander-bodied 260/75 (YOI 2260/75) to local enthusiasts and unique Wright TT-bodied 258 (XOI 2258) — illustrated on p29 this month — to Ayrshire's Preservation World. Leopards 132, 242 (GEZ 6232, ROI 132; WOI 2242) went to Hamill (dealer), Aghahill for scrap.

The annual delicensing of buses not required during the school holiday period resulted in 185 vehicles being set aside. Additionally, 12 further early Leyland Tiger/Alexander N-types dating from 1984-86 delicensed to reserve were

340/8 (DXI 3340/8), 380/92/6/408/9 (FXI 380 etc), 424/8/9/46 (GXI 424 etc), 473 (HXI 473). These, like the Leopards, are not expected to be required in September. If this is the case, it will mark the beginning of normal withdrawals from the large Tiger fleet. Had it not been for the formation of Translink in 1996, and the consequent starvation of investment, the 534 N-type Tigers bought in 1984-90 would all have been phased out by now. Despite the substantial fleet replacement now being made, it will be several years before we mark the end of the Tiger, as we have witnessed the end of the Leopard this year and of the Bristol REL last year.

Vehicles returned to service from reserve were Mercedes-Benz 711D/Alexander 904 (JAZ 3904) at Larne and unique Mercedes 709D/Ulsterbus Charabanc 5 (CZ 1988, NXI 6840) rebuilt in 1994 and named *Endeavour*. This has been overhauled and repainted in a historic cream and dark red livery used by the former LMS Northern Counties Committee Railway Company on its bus services before 1935. It is based in Coleraine, where one hopes it will see more useful service than in recent years.

Leyland Tiger/Alexander Q-types 1355/70 (TXI 1355, UXI 1370) 2640/50/7/60 (SXI 2640 etc), 2663 (VXI 2663) have been given all-over advertising 'wraps' for Spar.

### Metro

Leyland Tiger/Alexander Q-types 1524/5 (DAZ 1524/5) and 2678/9 (VXI 2678/9), and the four Mercedes-Benz O405GN articulated buses, 3100-3 (DCZ 3100-3), were delicensed for the school holiday period.

Neoplan N4014NF 2009 (IAZ 2009), used as a mobile classroom unit visiting local schools, has been re-numbered 4009 in the engineering and miscellaneous vehicle series to release its number for a new Ayats Brava coach in the Ulsterbus fleet.

Volvo B10BLE/Wright Renown 2815 (CCZ 8815) has received the all-over 'wrap' advertisement for Spar.

### Flexibus

Mercedes-Benz Vario O814D/Plaxton Cheetah coaches 1/2 (OCZ 8001/2) have returned to service from reserve. As reported under the Ulsterbus fleet, Mercedes-Benz 904 and the Charabanc, 5, latterly allocated to Flexibus, have been reinstated in the parent company fleet.

### Dublin Bus

More new Volvo B7TL/Alexander Dennis ALX400 H49/27F delivered are AX503 at Summerhill and AX504-8 at Harristown, which also expects AX509-16. After that, Conyngham Road will receive AX517-25, Donnybrook AX526-45 and Ringsend

**Left:** The first tri-axle coaches for Bus Éireann are two of these Irizar PB-bodied Scania K-series in Eurolines livery. Here, SP89 leaves Cork bus station on 29 July. **STEPHEN LYNCH**

**Below:** The new Airlink identity on Dublin Bus AV116 (00 D 70116), an Alexander ALX400-bodied Volvo B7TL. **DARREN HALL**

AX546-8. Allocation details for AX549-648, which are for fleet expansion, are not yet available.

As a result of these latest deliveries, all 10 remaining single-deckers at Phibsboro', DAF SB220LT/Alexander Setanta AD46-9, 52/4-6, 62/5 (94 D 33046 etc), have been withdrawn. Also due for early withdrawal (four are understood to have been taken out of service already) are Conyngham Road-based Volvo B10B/Alexander Setanta VA1, 3-10 (96 D 2001/3-10). Volvo Olympians RV354-6 are likely to be converted to open-top tour buses.

Volvo B7TLs AV116/7 are the first examples repainted in a new turquoise Best Impressions-designed Airlink livery.

### Bus Éireann

Two former Centra Scania L94UBs on short-term lease for a new service in Waterford city are Wright Access Floline-bodied S350 SET and Wright Solar YL51 ZUD. They will not receive corporate livery.

Further new Scania K-series/Irizar PB coaches include tri-axle SP89 (06 D 59024) and SP90, which are both longer and taller than standard. They are allocated to Waterford for Eurolines duties. Stranorlar has 12.2m standard specification SP66 (06 D 49945), while Galway has SP67-9, 71/2 (06 D 49370, 49943/6/4/2), Cork has SP73/4 (06 D 53815, 536521) and Broadstone has Eurolines-liveried SP86-8 (06 D 54790/89/7). Although allocated initially to Broadstone, SP51 has gone to Dundalk for Belfast express workings but, pending full driver familiarisation with digital tachographs, has been working service 100X (see last month).

Former Aircocah Volvo B10M/Caetano Algarves VC218/9 (00 D 95822, 95909) have become available to Broadstone, which has also cascaded Mercedes-Benz O404/Hispano MH25/6 on to schools duties — the first MHs so treated. Of the re-acquired Scania/Irizar coaches for schoolbus work, SI50/9 have been transferred from Stranorlar to Ballina and SI60/1 are at Waterford, while SI69 has arrived at Broadstone but awaits official allocation along with SI57, 72. Volvo/Plaxton coaches VP93, 100 have emerged in largely plain white Bus Scoile format, while VP93-7, 102/3 are allocated to school duties at Waterford (VP93-6) and Ballina (VP97, 102/3). VP98/9 continue officially on service duties at Waterford while VP101/4 do likewise (but unofficially) at Dundalk, white liveried VP104 operating service 100X.

Following further critical physical examination, many schoolbuses fitted with seatbelts have been condemned from further service and have had their seatbelts removed. Significantly, this includes Cavan-based Leyland Lynxes LS64/6 (88 D 43568, 89 D 52233), the first 'official' withdrawals of this type.

Also withdrawn are GAC Rural Bus schoolbuses KS23, 39, 97 (EZV 23 etc), KS141/2/57/8/60/3 (PZV 141 etc) and KS221/2 (87 D 2221/2).

## OTHER OPERATORS

### Aircocah FG

The three new dual-door Volvo B7RLE/Wright Eclipse Urbans for First Northern Ireland's car park shuttle at Belfast International Airport, 66992-4 (RKZ 4761/0/2), have displaced the three single-door B7RLEs borrowed from First Glasgow; 69027 (SF55 UAV) has gone to Dublin Airport, re-registered 06 D 64050, but we await news of 69022/42 (SF55 OAP, UBB).

### Lough Swilly

Volvo B10M/Plaxton Paramount 002 (DUI 257) — the last vehicle owned from new by this operator — has been re-registered 86 DL 2748. The significance of this is that vehicles allocated to school transport must be registered in Co. Donegal, which suggests that it has been demoted after 20 years as the flagship of the fleet.

Another Donegal mark noted is 94 DL 5808 on Dennis Dart/Wright Handybus 491 (CAZ 6616). Similar 481 (CAZ 6608) has been noted in overall white livery, while 492-9 are cream/red.

Another ex-Citybus Leyland Tiger/Alexander N-type acquired, possibly for spare parts, is NXI 4634, which was new to Citybus as 2634.

Ex-Clydeside Leyland Leopard/Alexander Y-type 383 (79 DL 630, BSJ 9047) passed to Colm Devine, Glasgow for preservation last year.

Withdrawn Bristol REL6G/Alexander 447/8 (82 DL 1420/1, WOI 2451/5) have gone for scrap. Similar 450/61/6/8/73 (82 DL 1423, BXI 2531; 83 DL 1649, BXI 2592; 83 DL 1652, XOI 2517; 83 DL 1653, XOI 2514; 83 DL 1655, XOI 2516) were withdrawn in June. Nineteen RELs remain in this fleet, with 84 to 86 plates, and are expected to return to school transport service in September.





## PRESERVATION UPDATE

HEATWAVE HERITAGE

### Teesside 291

Teesside trolleybus 291, illustrated last month, is privately owned and resides at the Black Country Living Museum, not at the East Anglian Transport Museum.

### Hull vintage bus rides

Sunday vintage bus rides are operating from Hull this summer using preserved East Yorkshire buses that include Beverley Barrow AEC Regent V 644 and Bedford OB 100. They are part of a Hidden Treasures campaign to encourage people to visit cultural attractions in the area and cost £5 (adult), £3 (child) or £15 (two adults and up to four children). The last two are on **20 and 27 August**. For details, phone 01482 324223.

#### Top and middle left:

Country Bus Rallies marked the 50th anniversary of Eastbourne Corporation's AEC Regent Vs — the south coast resort's nearest equivalent to a Routemaster — with a running day on 23 July, in which not only Regent Vs but other corporation and company bus types added a touch of nostalgia to the hot summer sunshine. Representing the birthday girls was Eastbourne 67 (KHC 367), a 1963 manual gearbox 2D3RV with 60-seat East Lancs body. Representing the BET company buses serving Eastbourne were two Leyland Titan PD2/12s. Maidstone & District DH379 (NKT 875) is a 1951 example with the final version of Leyland body, which for many years was mistakenly believed to be called the Farington body. It isn't. That was an older design. Southdown 786 (RUF 186) of 1956 has a Beadle body. **SWANSWELL**

**Left:** Crowds of visitors around Porto 66, the 1967 Dalfá-bodied Lancia double-decker at the Sandtoft Trolleybus Museum's annual gathering on 30 July. The modern lines of this Portuguese city bus — a what-might-have-been for British trolleybus supporters — contrast with the Reading and Bradford vehicles behind.

**GARY MITCHELHILL**

**BUSES**







**Above:** For many, finding a shady spot under a tree was as vital as inspecting the buses at the Alton, Hampshire running day and rally on 16 July. Visible beyond the foliage are Bristol MWs in Red & White, Bristol Omnibus and Royal Blue livery, as well as a Bedford OB bus and a Plaxton-bodied Bedford J2 minicoach. **JOHN PITTY**



**Above and below:** A running day on 16 July officially marked the 10th anniversary of Stagecoach's acquisition of Devon General from Transit Holdings, but also occurred 20 years after Devon General became the first National Bus Company bus-operating subsidiary to be privatised. Movements were centred on the coach station, where preserved Exeter City Transport 86 (86 GFJ), a 1963 Leyland Titan PD2A/30 with Massey body, is seen leaving the event with a Devon General Bristol VR and a Transit Holdings era two-door minibus in the background. Photographed at the Crossmead terminus is Devon General 537 (NDV 537G), a 1969 Leyland Atlantean with Metro-Cammell Weymann body built by Cammell Laird (Anglesey) at a time when MCW's Birmingham factory was working flat-out bodying AEC Merlin single-deckers for London Transport. The Belgrave Road-Crossmead service was Exeter City Transport route J and Devon General's C. **TOM BRAUND**



## RALLY CALENDAR UPDATE

### AUGUST

- 19/20 **Detling, near Maidstone.** Steam & Transport Rally, Kent County Showground.  
**Lathalmond, Fife.** Scottish Vintage Bus Museum open weekend, celebrating centenary of Scottish Motor Traction.  
**Gisburn, Lancs.** Ribble Valley Vintage Club Rally, Sawley Brow.  
**20 Leighton Buzzard** London Transport 1950s and 1960s running day.  
**Basingstoke.** Hampshire Commercial Vehicle Road Run.  
**26-28 Sandtoft** Trolleybus Museum Six-Wheel Weekend.  
**Hellingly, E Sussex** Festival of Transport, A22 near Boship, Hailsham.  
**27 Huntingdon.** Bedford Gathering 2006. Huntingdon Racecourse.  
**27/28 Crich** Transport Extravaganza, Derbyshire.  
**28 Cobham** Bus Museum Routemaster Day.  
**Sunderland** rally, Seaburn Recreation Park.  
**Gosport** bus rally and running day, Stokes Bay.

### SEPTEMBER

- 2 Theydon Bois, Essex.** Running day and enthusiasts' bazaar based at new village hall. Peter Osborn will operate red RF486 departing Aldgate Bus Station stop M at 09.15 and will follow route 721 to Romford (North Street Garage), then will change to a 250 departing at 10.05, arriving Theydon Bois at 10.45. Return journey departs 16.10. Claire Green will operate her newly repainted Bristol LH6L BL49 (*Dolly*) on route 304 departing Chingford Station stop F at 10.40, arriving at Theydon Bois 10.55, returning 16.05.  
**3 Merthyr Tydfil.** Bus & Coach Wales 2006.  
**Manchester.** Trans-Lancs Historic Vehicle Rally, Heaton Park.  
**Dorking** Country Bus Rallies running day.  
**Norwich** Bus Rally,  
**9/10 Lowestoft.** East Anglia Transport Museum Trolleybus Weekend.  
**10 Sheffield** Transport Rally, Meadowhall Shopping Centre  
**Chingford** running day, Royal Forest Hotel, Rangers Road. Free bus service every 30min from Chingford Station stop F, 10.40 to 15.10.  
**Tenterden, Kent.** Country Bus Rallies running day in conjunction with Kent & East Sussex Railway and M&D and East Kent Bus Club.  
**Lytham St Annes.** Fairhaven Lake Vehicle Show.

### PORTSMOUTH/SOUTHAMPTON RUNNING DAYS

The Portsmouth running day planned for **2 September** has been **cancelled** and the Southampton event planned for **3 September** has been **postponed** to a date (yet to be fixed) in October.





## BUSES UNDER FIRE – NORTHERN IRELAND'S BUSES IN THE TROUBLES

**MICHAEL COLLINS, COLOURPOINT  
BOOKS, ISBN 1 904242 34 0,  
255mm x 210mm, 184pp,  
SOFTBACK, £14.99**

This book is one of the most remarkable works ever published about any aspect of the UK bus industry. It provides a unique and much needed account of how operators in Northern Ireland and their employees maintained a public service over the most sustained period of civil unrest that has ever afflicted any part of these islands. A period when nearly 1,500 buses were destroyed maliciously and bombs or bullets killed 17 bus workers on either side of the Irish border.

Although written by a lifelong transport enthusiast who knows his Bristols from his CVG6s, this is far more than an ordinary bus book. Although primarily about life at Ulsterbus, Citybus and Belfast Corporation Transport, it also is a well-written 50-year history of Northern Ireland. The tales of destruction of buses, depots and bus stations — with photographs to prove the point — are set in the context of much bigger political events.

Most of the text is taken from verbatim interviews with bus managers and employees, whose vivid recollections frequently had me imagining I was in the unlit buses being pelted with missiles, diverted down side-streets to avoid rioters, seized in the middle of nowhere by masked men armed with goodness knows what or evacuated when a suspicious package began emitting the telltale whiff of marzipan that meant only one thing: there was a bomb on board.

The stories aren't all grim, though. Humour shines through many of these recollections. Of the pipe-smoking Belfast Corporation driver who lost his best smoke when he hit one of the army's first rudimentary road-blocking ramps in the dark or the passenger's newly purchased box of shoes that was flung into a suburban garden in the mistaken belief that the box contained a bomb. Of the adventures staff experienced collecting secondhand replacement buses from England in the 1970s. Or of how depots at risk of losing buses hoped against hope that the hijackers would take real heaps like the Potteries single-deck Fleetlines or ex-London Swifts.

There are stories of great human kindness offered to drivers and passengers traumatised by hijackings in districts they didn't know, even from paramilitaries whose own moral code would legitimise the destruction of a bus, but not its driver or passengers. 'Real' paramilitaries rarely wanted to steal the drivers' cash trays.

The message that comes through above all is that Ulsterbus and Citybus in particular tried to keep services running no matter what. If people saw buses back on the streets, they had a sense that life was returning closer to normality. Towards that end, the bus operators tried to distance themselves from the army and minimise the impression that these state-owned bus companies were arms of the state.

All these drivers, engineers, inspectors and managers performed a



heroic task in the face of unpredictable adversity, but the heroes' hero — and one of the key interviewees in the book — is Werner Heubeck, the inspirational German industrial manager who was Ulsterbus managing director for 18 years from its formation in 1967 and who had the former Belfast Corporation operations foisted upon him when local government was reformed in 1973.

His intelligent leadership, and his willingness to mix with and look after the workforce, helped these businesses prosper despite the nightmare conditions in which they often functioned. One of the most enduring stories of the period — related in several of the interviews with staff — was that Werner Heubeck personally carried bombs off buses, but the book puts a different slant on what might otherwise be seen as foolhardiness in the extreme. What actually happened was that he and one or two of his senior colleagues removed devices only after rigorous questioning of drivers convinced them that those devices were hoaxes. By doing so, he saved a few buses from being wrecked if the army carried out controlled explosions of these hoax devices.

Aside from the Troubles, the book reminds us of how far ahead of his time this man was. For he turned the Ulster Transport Authority's loss-making bus operation into the eternally profitable Ulsterbus overnight without cutting services. By removing layers of administrators and increasing crews' productivity, he transformed the economics of the regulated, state-owned Northern Ireland bus industry 19 years before a new generation of mainland UK proprietors took advantage of deregulation and privatisation to do the same.

**ALAN MILLAR**

## NEWCASTLE TROLLEYBUSES

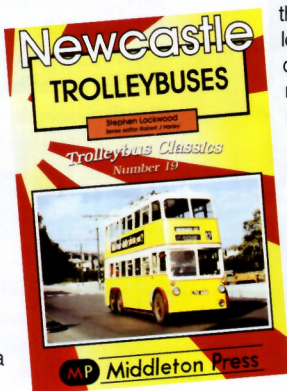
**STEPHEN LOCKWOOD, MIDDLETON PRESS,  
ISBN 1 904474 78 0, 235mm x 168mm,  
48pp, SOFTBACK, £14.95**

In its true glory, Newcastle upon Tyne's trolleybus system lasted only 16 years. Although launched in 1935, it took until 1950 to reach its full extent, only to be abandoned by 1966. Yet at its peak it was one of Britain's biggest systems, with 186 very visible yellow vehicles running on over 20 routes (including shared sections).

This 19th book in Middleton Press's long-running *Trolleybus Classics* series celebrates the system in its own idiosyncratic style. There's a short but

information-packed introduction, then the narrative takes the form of 120 long numbered photo captions, divided by chapter into the major route groups. There is no page numbering.

The same chronology is repeated for each route, so fascinating prewar and immediate postwar pictures are interspersed somewhat disconcertingly with more numerous shots from the 1950s and 1960s. But it's a joy to find so many splendid trolleybus pictures brought together, including gems such as one of a



Karrier trolleybus and a tram at the corner of Grainger Street. And the characteristic London-style MCCW-bodied BUTs (known locally as 'Gosforths') and buses with local Northern Coachbuilders bodies are everywhere.

The informative captions concentrate on the system rather than buses, and especially the turning arrangements, but you can look up terse model names like F4 (a Sunbeam) in a chapter near the back. And you get route maps, engineering drawings, facsimile tickets and timetables.

You end up with many what-ifs. What if the Osborne Road route had continued to Matthew Bank, as intended? What if trolleys had run into Gateshead? What if the system had survived? Then you look at the massive clutter of overhead wiring (an understandable preoccupation in the photography), and begin to understand why it didn't.

The photographic reproduction is pale, and the very functional layout will win no prizes for design, but as a compact, nostalgic reference work, this is hard to beat.

**PETER ROWLANDS**

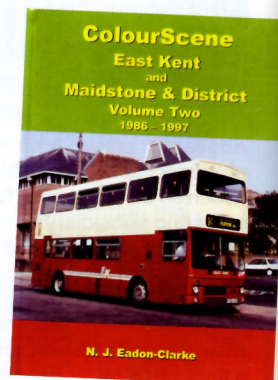
## COLOURSCENE EAST KENT AND MAIDSTONE & DISTRICT VOLUME TWO 1986-1997

**N. J. EADON-CLARKE, DTS PUBLISHING,  
ISBN 1 900515 31 8, 290mm x 215mm,  
96pp, HARDBACK £20.95**

I don't know if it was just my copy, but a significant number of pictures in this book were very much the wrong colour. M&D's green often came out grey, East Kent's red and poppy red look decidedly weird on occasions and some of the shots are blue. Other shots are decidedly fuzzy. This cannot have been the photographer's fault, for when everything is right the colours are spot on.

This is all a pity for, once again, Mr Eadon-Clarke has put together a fascinating selection of shots that prove, whatever your views on the politics, that the 1985 Transport Act ushered in a new golden age for bus enthusiasm. What variety of buses and liveries we enjoyed and it all emphasises how dull it has all become since then. Indeed, towards the end of the book, just note how jarring the original Stagecoach livery is. As with Volume One, there are plenty of shots of service vehicles, depot pictures and withdrawn stock to give a full flavour.

Wearing my professional hat as a former M&D director, I take issue with some of the captions. In the introduction and on p6, there is an interpretation of the reasons for the introduction of minibuses. Certainly in M&D's case, virtually none of this applied. It was all about frequency and the type of bus followed on. For example, only part of one route (the 105 if you want to be picky) covered ground big buses couldn't. Every other route was a simple conversion. On p19 there is reference to the upseating of M&D's short Leopards from 45 to 52 but them being withdrawn prematurely. The reverse





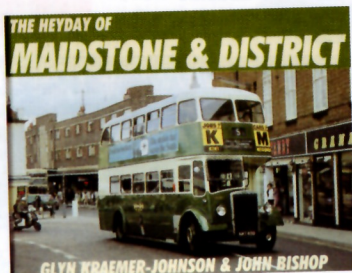
is true, The upseating allowed us to continue using these reliable and written down buses on tendered services in Edenbridge and they attained over 20 years' service.

But no matter, there are some terrific shots of hired buses, buses with subsequent owners, the fleets of Hastings & District and New Enterprise that were all part of the tale. It's a delightful reminder of a special part of bus history that deserves, 20 years on, to be seen for its huge positive benefits, a reawakening of buses even, rather than the dreary view put by critics. You don't have to be an M&D and EK aficionado to enjoy the variety this book records.

ROGER DAVIES

## HEYDAY OF MAIDSTONE & DISTRICT

GLYN KRAEMER-JOHNSON and JOHN BISHOP  
IAN ALLAN PUBLISHING, ISBN 7110 3115 0,  
185mm x 245mm,  
80pp, HARDBACK, £14.99.



Heyday? I don't think any of us would dispute the authors' choice of heyday, but, er... um... it does raise some questions. While some of the buses depicted are pristine, others are a little careworn. After all, things were going very wrong in the late 1960s and a byproduct of this book is that it shows it.

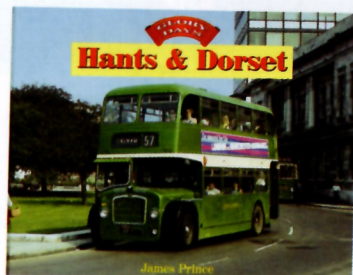
It's all worth it for the introduction. What a fabulous description of where M&D stood in the hierarchy of operators in the South East. But the book then doesn't follow it up. There are precious few pictures of M&D buses getting their paintwork dusty in the Medway Towns, really the heart of the company, and lots of pictures in Maidstone, Hastings, Tunbridge Wells and remote corners of the empire. But what pictures they are — the back of a PD2 on p24, the incredible lack of other traffic in the Old Steine in Brighton as a rather rumpled PD2 makes its way across on p21 and a stunning picture of an ex-Chatham & District Guy in Tunbridge Wells, complete with driver in white-topped hat on p19. And a trolleybus picture (by the late Phil Tatt) in Hastings on p35 that defies description.

There are a few lovely pictures of service vehicles and some wonderful shots that show just how classic the BET Federation design of single-decks in the late 1960s was. It suffers a bit from rather too many pictures of Bristol Ks and Leyland PD2s, if that is possible, but the layout by vehicle type works really well. It just goes to show, and I know I'm biased, that M&D was a fascinatingly diverse company whether it was BET, NBC or privately owned. And surely Tunbridge Wells West station closed when trains ceased running to Eridge rather than Uckfield, which doesn't detract at all from the lovely picture of the PD2 on p27. A great fleet, a lovely memory of it. Buy it to remind you how things used to be.

ROGER DAVIES

## GLORY DAYS HANTS & DORSET

JAMES PRINCE. IAN ALLAN PUBLISHING, ISBN 7110 3105 3, 185mm x 245mm,  
96pp, HARDBACK, £16.99.  
This occasionally hit and miss



series hits more often than it misses and this volume is a definite hit. James Prince, who grew up in and still lives in the territory served by the old Hants & Dorset has assembled a comprehensive history of the company from its birth as Bournemouth & District to its privatisation close to 20 years ago.

As with most titles in this and the publisher's Heyday series, one could question just how glorious were its days by the difficult 1970s, when major bus operators the length and breadth of the realm struggled against rising costs and falling patronage and allowed once immaculate presentation standards to go by the board. But as authors and publishers will tell you, those were among the golden years of bus photography and if we want to see hitherto unpublished pictures of glory days buses, some of those will have been taken after the glory became a bit tarnished.

Two glories distinguished H&D. One was its showpiece split-level bus and coach station in Bournemouth (buses on the roof, Royal Blue coaches downstairs), which was gutted by fire in 1976 and demolished four years later. The other is the variety of vehicles operated in a group that standardised ostensibly on Bristol chassis and ECW bodies for most of its most glorious years. There were other types as well as some unconventional rebuilds. In the immediate postwar period, it took two small batches of non-standard double-deckers — highbridge Leylands ordered originally for South Africa and lowbridge AECs apparently diverted from Western SMT. The Leylands are illustrated in the book, but the AECs are absent, which seems curious given that they operated into the early 1960s.

Towards the end, the pictures chronicle the change from green to National Bus Company poppy red after H&D merged with Wilts & Dorset, as well as the mixture of increasingly non-standard types drafted to the Hampshire and Dorset coast as the company entered the 1980s and its final years of recognisable existence.

ALAN MILLAR

## BUS OPERATORS 1970: SOUTH-WEST AND SOUTHERN ENGLAND

GAVIN BOOTH. IAN ALLAN PUBLISHING, ISBN 7110 3034 0, 285mm x 220mm, 80pp, HARDBACK, £16.99.

The third in this series covers an area dominated by former Tilling companies — Bristol Omnibus Company, Western and Southern National, Wilts & Dorset, Hants & Dorset and Southern Vectis. Inevitably, their largely Bristol and ECW buses account for many of the colour and black and white pictures.

However, there is relief — both in types of vehicles and the colours in which they were painted — in the municipally-owned Plymouth, Exeter, Swindon, Bournemouth and Southampton fleets, as well as BET-owned Devon

General and a virtual handful of independents. One of the most striking colour pictures is of the East Lancs-bodied Dennis Loline that Hutchings & Cornelius operated in deepest Somerset.

As with the earlier books in the series, the text chronicles

the fate of these operators at a pivotal point in their existence, as the ex-Tilling and BET companies came under National Bus Company control and independents like King Alfred prepared to breathe their last.

ALAN MILLAR

## BUS HANDBOOKS: STAGECOACH, FIRST, SCOTTISH, WELSH

BRITISH BUS PUBLISHING, ISBN 1 904875, then 06 8 (Stagecoach), 16 5 (First) or 01 7 (Scottish) and 1 897990 34 0 (Welsh), 210mm x 145mm; 192pp (Stagecoach), 224pp (First), 144pp (Scottish), 112pp (Welsh), SOFTBACK, £16.95 (Stagecoach and First), £15.75 (Scottish), £13.25 (Welsh)

These four most recent offerings cover the two product ranges in the Handbook series, two of the annually updated national publications on the big groups, two of the regional books devoted to fleets other than First, Stagecoach and Arriva.

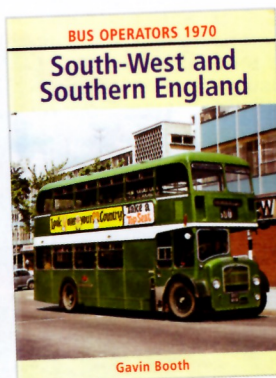
The Stagecoach book is the same size as last year's, but the content reflects the rapid changes in the group's business. No overseas buses are listed (the New Zealand business has

been sold and until now the Stagecoach Handbook listed only the subsidiary companies and not the vehicles in the Coach USA division). Instead, the Merseyside and former Traction Group fleets are included, the latter going in at a fairly late stage of production, which probably explains why at least one of the acquired vehicles (the Metroliner 400GT illustrated in Fleet News this month) appears only in the index and not in the main tables. The First book is the same size as last year's and includes most, but curiously not all of the StreetCars in York; however, it does identify the fleet number allocated to the prototype.

With First and Stagecoach no longer listed, the Welsh book is smaller and cheaper than the previous edition produced six years ago. The Scottish volume also is slimmer than its 2002 predecessor, but £1 more expensive. Unfortunately, it isn't as accurate everywhere as it ought to be. Two notable errors are a caption suggesting that Lothian bought its Volvo B7RLEs to replace its Leyland Lynxes

(which went long before the Volvos were ordered) and the listing (and captioned picture) of two Volvo B10BLEs added to the Slaemuir fleet. The Handbook would have you believe they have Wright Renown bodies and were ex-Bus Éireann. They came from J. J. Kavanagh and, as the picture shows, have Alexander ALX300 bodies. I hope these are isolated bloomers in a generally accurate publication.

ALAN MILLAR

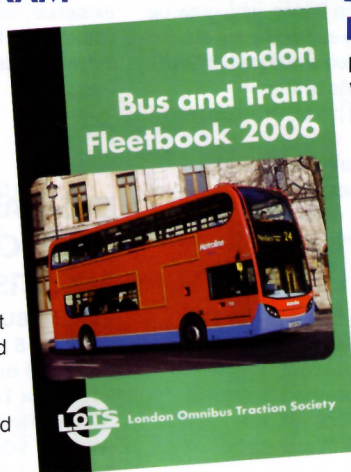




## LONDON BUS AND TRAM FLEETBOOK 2006

**LONDON OMNIBUS TRACTION SOCIETY, ISBN 1 897983 85 9, 145mm x 105mm, 128pp, SOFTBACK, £6.50**

The annual pocket-sized LOTS Fleetbook continues to offer exactly what it says on the tin — an accurate, up-to-date listing of all the major and minor fleets providing local bus and sightseeing tour services in the old London Transport Area. The listings are complemented by useful brief profiles of each operator and the already affordable price has been held level for the third successive year.



## LONDON BUSES IN 2005

**Edited by TONY WILSON and MALCOLM YOUNG, LONDON OMNIBUS TRACTION SOCIETY, No ISBN number, 230mm x 170mm, 60pp, SOFTBACK, £6**  
This all-colour LOTS publication is another 'must have' for anyone with an interest in London buses, providing an overview of the main events, a company-by-company survey, lists of

tendered service contract awards and new vehicle deliveries. The most significant events covered are the July terrorist attacks and their aftermath, and the end of normal Routemaster operation, but we are reminded of lesser, yet significant happenings like the appearance of the Enviro200 prototype, the arrival of NCP Challenger and the demise of Leaside Travel.



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ALAN MILLAR



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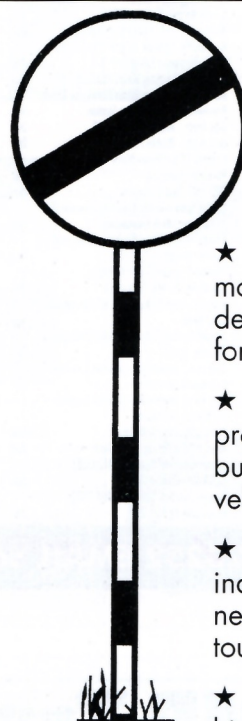
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**1396 CVRTC Rally Gaydon. June 2006. UK. Trucks / Lorries / Commercials.** Part one of our extensive survey of this amazing celebration of commercials.  
**1397 CVRTC Rally Gaydon. June 2006. UK. Trucks/Lorries/Commercials.** Second part of coverage include lorries leaving in the wonderful sunshine.  
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**1399 Burnley and Blackburn, Lancashire, UK. Buses. June 2006.** Two weekday afternoon visits with buses earning their living in glorious summer weather.  
**1400 Runcorn, Cheshire. Trucks. June 2006.** By popular request we recommence coverage of the current trucking scene with the hectic traffic by the M56.  
**1401 Cardiff. South Wales. UK. Buses. June 2006.** The colourful new art Scania and a comprehensive survey of all operators seen on a hot sunny day.



**1402 Newport. South Wales. UK. Buses. June 2006.** A super sunny summer Saturday morning with sparkling scenes of the hectic bus services.  
**1403 Exeter, Torquay, Devon. UK. Buses. July 2006.** Another sunny Saturday in scorching Exeter and Torquay, plenty of activity and the most friendly crews.  
**1404 Plymouth. Devon. UK. Buses. July 2006.** A chance to catch up on the busy bus scene on a hot Saturday afternoon with both new buses and livery.  
**1405 British Truck Scenes. Summer 2006. UK. Trucks.** Lymm Services in June plus Swansea Transport Festival and scenes near Stanlow refinery Cheshire.  
**1406 Cheltenham, Gloucester. UK. Buses. July 2006.** An update on the bus scene in Cheltenham, Saturday morning and Gloucester in the afternoon.  
**1407 Riga. Latvia. Tram. Trolleybus. Bus. June 2006.** A very interesting and modernised city with plenty of activity on all fronts in sunny weather.  
**1408 Lincolnshire. UK. Buses. July 2006.** The main visit is to Lincoln city, changeover to Stagecoach livery, also includes Grantham and a first visit to Skegness.

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**661 Edinburgh, UK. Buses. September 1998.** Introduction of corporate First Group livery, open top services, all operators as seen in bright diffused light.  
**689 Bristol, UK. Buses. 1998/99.** Most fleet numbers announced to aid identification, in winter sunshine between Dec 1998 and Jan 1999.

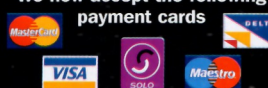
**731 Edinburgh, UK. Buses. July 1999** with new Dennis Tridents in service, changes in Lothian fleetline. Vintage buses of Macs tours  
**757 Birmingham, UK. Buses. November 1999.** with fleet numbers announced. A variety of central locations with low floor deckers and articulated buses.  
**847 Birmingham. West Midlands. UK. Buses. November 2000.** The Birmingham bus scenes in November 2000, extensive route alterations in the city centre  
**882 Edinburgh / Falkirk. UK. April 2001. Buses.** Falkirk bus station on a Monday afternoon and a visit to Edinburgh on a Tuesday morning.  
**929 West Midlands. UK. Buses. Oct 2001.** Birmingham City Centre for diversions around reconstruction work.  
**937 Bristol. UK. Bus. November 2001.** Two visits starting with December 2000 and then November 2001 also Western Super Mare  
**958 Edinburgh. UK. Buses. March 2002.** Temporary coach stops, the latter days of the Lothian/First bus war (nose to tail) and Macs tour fleet in operation.  
**1026 Birmingham. UK. Buses. October 2002.** All operators as seen, the work around Bull Ring continues, crews are friendly as usual and plenty of new deckers



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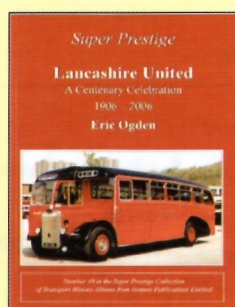
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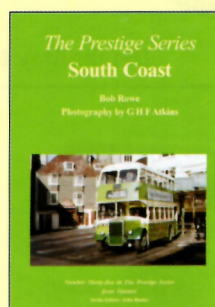


# MDS BOOK SALES NEW SUMMER READING

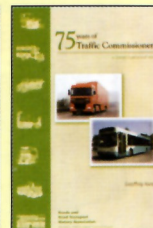
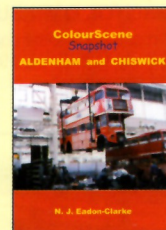
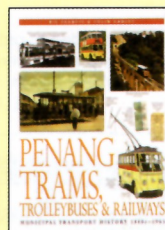
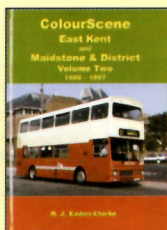
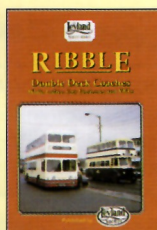
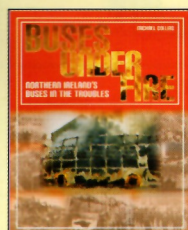
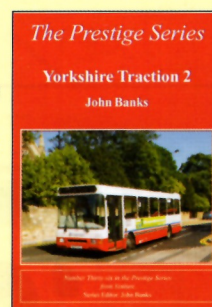
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This comprehensive history covers in detail the formation of the business in 1919, with its South Wales connections, up to the closure of the Pemberton premises in Wigan early in 2005. Copiously illustrated throughout, covering in detail the development of the changing body styles, but not forgetting the human input. Includes a look at Massey Brothers of Wigan, who were taken over in 1967. After 70 years of control from Cardiff, the intricate changes in NCME's ownership are traced up

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### 20438 Bristol VR8II SOUTHDOWN NBC COASTLINER

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### 30704 AEC Renown CROSVILLE

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### 22714 Alexander Y type NORTHERN SCOTTISH

The positive response we received to our recently released Northern Scottish Olympian encouraged us to produce this Y type. Part of this large fleet NPE 32A registered OSJ 630R is working route 215 to Aberdeen. ☐ JUNE RELEASE.



### 18009 MCW Fleetline ROCHDALE CORPORATION

The first of a new fleet for us is the blue and cream livery of Rochdale Corporation which suits our MCW Fleetline model very well. Registered 6326 DK fleet number 326 operates route 21T to Rochdale. ☐ JULY RELEASE.



### 26806 Leyland Duple Coach BERE REGIS & DISTRICT

Bere Regis & District is an interesting fleet that we have not visited for some time. Registered GCG 920 works away from its usual operating area en route to Horsham. ☐ JULY RELEASE.



### 29408 Bristol RELH Dual Purpose Coach BRISTOL OMNIBUS

The green and cream livery applied by Bristol Coaches is complemented with the addition of the new coach style wheel hubs that we have made for our new RELH coach. Fleet number 2070 registered GHY 132K is operating route 184 to Frome. ☐ JULY RELEASE.



### 17217 Leyland National Mki Long NORTHERN TYNE & WEAR

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